BBC

**Max Hastings on the Dambusters:** "It created a biblical catastrophe"

# MAGAZINE

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Elizabeth I's shock French alliance

**Hitler's millionaire** backers

Catherine the Great: a sex-mad tyrant?





Step-into England's story

### WELCOME

## BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

### OCTOBER 2019

Why do people fight? Throughout history, armies have waged war for a wide variety of reasons: the need for security, the hunger for territory, the drive of ideology and the dream of glory. Sometimes, though, it's all about the money. In this month's cover feature, popular historian Dan Jones revisits the era of the crusades to consider whether the **medieval holy warriors were motivated more by God or gold**. You'll find his article on page 20.

The power of money is something we also need to factor in when considering the **rise of the Nazis in 1930s Germany**. Despite their ruthlessness, Hitler's National Socialists did not seize control unaided, and owed much of their success to allies among the country's wealthy conservative elite. To explore this story, I interviewed Dr Stephan Malinowski, contributor to a major new BBC Two documentary series about how some of **Germany's most influential figures** unwittingly assisted the rise of the Third Reich. Turn to page 26 for that.

One of this autumn's major historical TV dramas will be shining the spotlight on **Russian empress Catherine the Great**. Helen Mirren is due to play the lead in the Sky series, and it will be interesting to see how far the script follows the negative rumours that surround the 18th-century ruler. Catherine is frequently viewed as a sex-crazed tyrant, but is this **a fair reflection of her reign and achievements**? On page 54, Professor Janet Hartley re-examines some of the most grievous charges against the empress. I hope you enjoy the issue.

**Rob Attar** 

Editor

### THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Dan Jones

My new book, *Crusaders*, explores how wealth, faith, piety and greed swirled together in the clashes between Christian and Muslim rulers during the Middle Ages. It's my pleasure to give readers a taste of it here.

Dan evaluates the lucrative business of war in the Holy Land on page 20



### **Estelle Paranque**

It was during my PhD that I became fascinated by the unexpected alliance between Elizabeth I and Henri III of France. I had to dig deeper, and finally discovered how complex and compelling their diplomatic relations were.

Estelle relates the tale of an unlikely royal friendship on page 40



### **Tom Holland**

Jan Žižka – the one-eyed inventor of the tank – and his army of Taborites have always seemed to me the most fascinating of medieval heretics. They foreshadow so much: from the Reformation to the French Revolution.

Tom tells the story of medieval Europe's proto-communist utopia on page 46

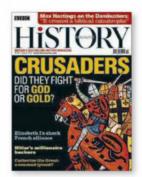
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### **OCTOBER 2019**

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Stephan Malinowski describes how Germany's most powerful figures facilitated the rise of the Third Reich

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### **40** Elizabeth I's French ally

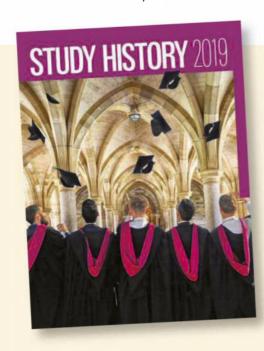
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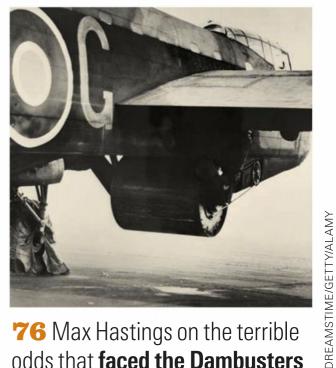


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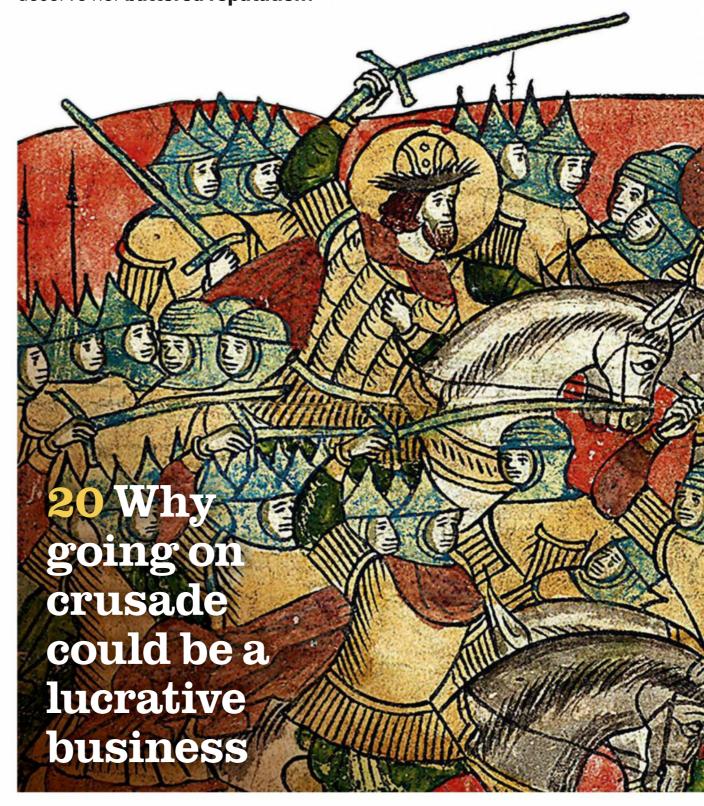
Read our guide to studying history at university, from spending a year abroad to how your degree can aid your career



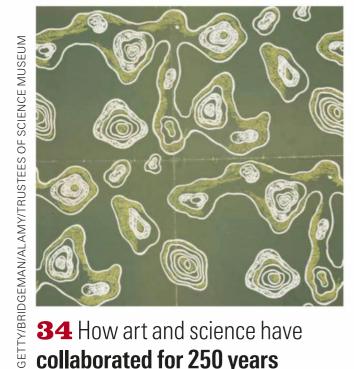
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Buy tickets for our Winchester and Chester events



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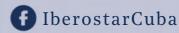


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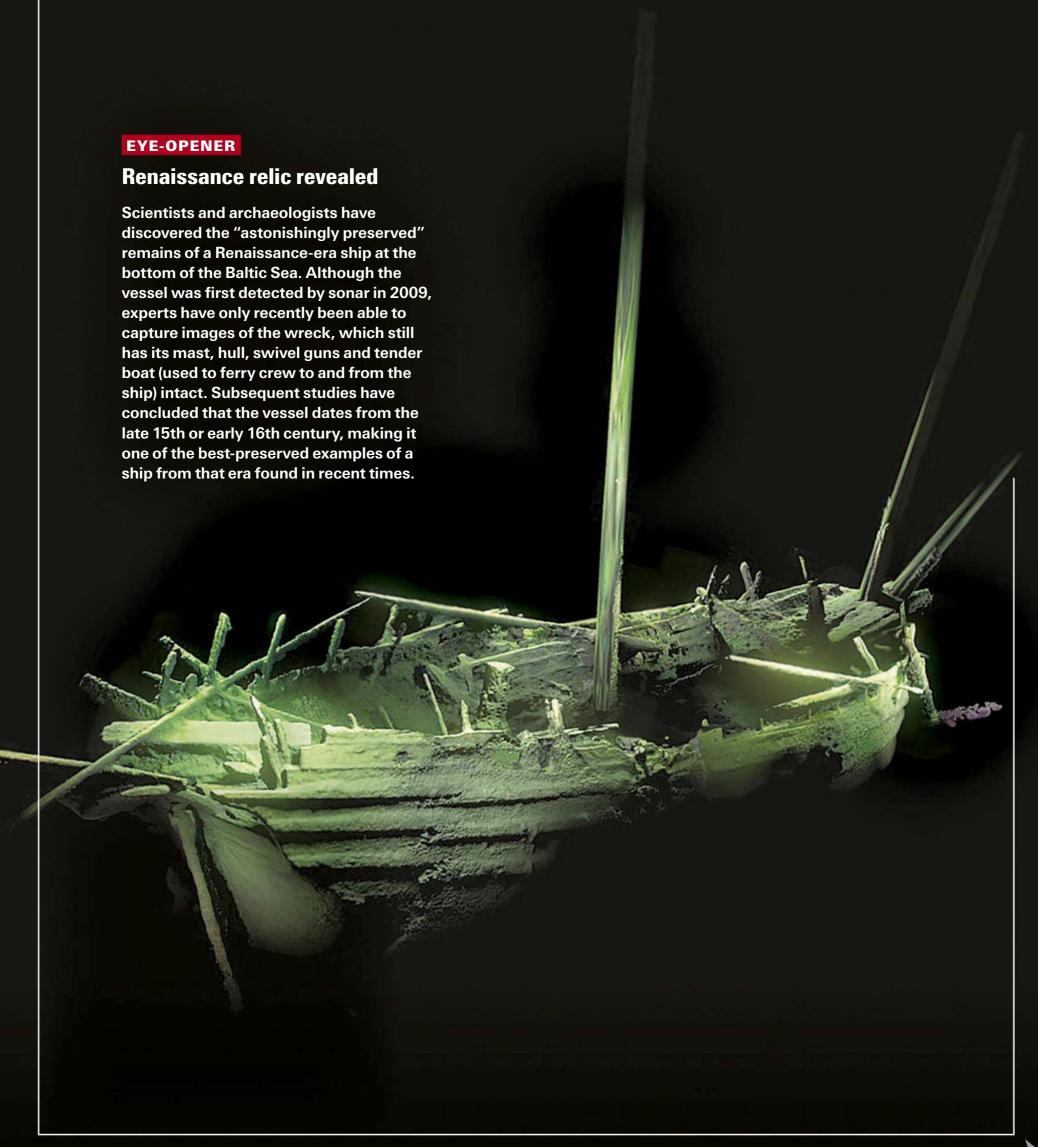


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NEWS ANNIVERSARIES COMMENT

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



### TALKING POINTS Emerging from the cocoons



A recent article in *The Economist* claiming that historians do little to engage the wider public provoked a stir online. **ANNA WHITELOCK** examines the Twitter reaction

arely have Twitter historians quite so unanimously agreed. When **U** The Economist (@TheEconomist) recently tweeted a link to an article by its 'Bagehot' columnist with the statement "Historians are isolated in professional cocoons, fiddling with footnotes rather than bringing the past to light for a broader audience", the gloves were off.

Cue a cacophony of tweets: some like that of history teacher Sara Sinaguglia (@SaraSinaguglia) asserting it was "simply not true", with others far fiercer – and cruder - in their criticisms. Indeed, it was perhaps the case that many of the historians who took exception to the article didn't actually read beyond the headline.

Those who did, however, offered some valuable critiques, such as the long and widely applauded thread by **Robert Saunders** (@redhistorian) who began by acknowledging that, while Bagehot was "correct about the importance of history and the urgency of a more historically informed public debate", the article erected "a series of straw men in its attack on academic history". Among many other points, Saunders noted, "Fiddling with footnotes' isn't a distraction from big new ideas: it's how they begin."

Others wondered if Bagehot was just as guilty of living inside a 'cocoon', with

### **Justin Champion**

(@monarchomach) – who Join the debate at has done much to promote the study of public history twitter.com/ asking whether anyone at historyextra *The Economist* had recently "been in a bookshop, watched the TV or heard of the public history projects in universities".

Meanwhile, **Alexander Clarke** (@AC\_NavalHistory) sought to give Bagehot the benefit of the doubt, tweeting the response: "We are trying to be loud and proud about it... but I'm sure if you don't follow any [historians] then perhaps you could get the impression we don't."

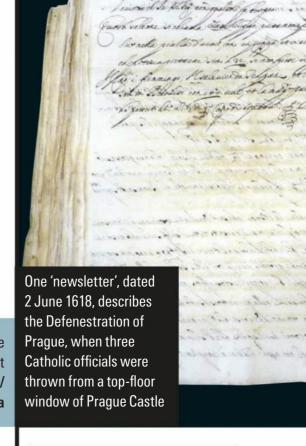
In a further rebuke, originally submitted as a letter to *The Economist* but not published, Miri Rubin (@MiriERubin) helpfully drew attention to the global success of Radio 4's *In Our Time*, explaining how the format of the programme depends on the contributions of expert academics, "who offer hours of preparation that ends up in 43 elegant minutes of radio time".

Certainly, *The Economist* got its wish if it sought to draw historians into a fiery public debate. In the words of **Nicodemus Demetrius** (@Nicodemetrius), "If historians are in a cocoon, then Twitter is the silk thread connecting them to the world."

> **Anna Whitelock** is the head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

**II** The Economist got its wish if it sought to draw historians into a fiery public debate //

Melvyn Bragg's radio series *In Our Time* relies on contributions from historians



### **RENAISSANCE EUROPE**

### **Manuscripts reveal** early news networks

A huge tranche of historic 'newsletters', offering a vivid insight into life in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries, is being investigated in Italy.

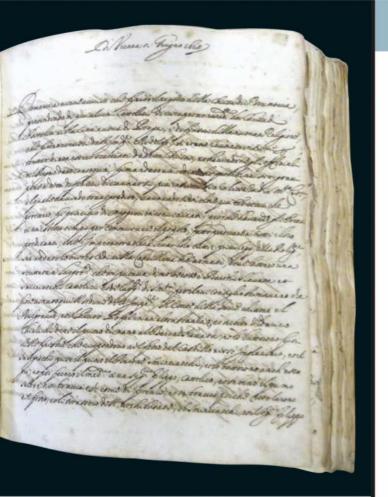
Brendan Dooley, professor of Renaissance studies at University College Cork, encountered the newsletters while carrying out research in the archives of the Medici family in Florence. Spanning 200 volumes, the manuscripts represent the single largest collection of the handwritten sheets known as avvisi - which were circulated among the cities and courts of early modern Europe following the advent of public mail routes.

Typically bought on the streets or by subscription, the manuscripts contain valuable information about news and current affairs in cities such as Warsaw, Paris and Madrid, and even from places as far afield as Britain, Ireland and the American colonies.

One newsletter, dated 19 March 1588, describes the Spanish Armada setting sail for the British Isles, revealing that the fleet included "140 or more sailing ships and eight months of provisions" as well as "17,000 combat soldiers and 8,000 sailors".

The same letter also discusses the reconstruction of the Rialto Bridge in Venice, explaining how new pilings sunk into the Grand Canal were found to be defective. Rather than being replaced, however, they were repaired in situ due to the "inconvenience" of closing the canal.





Elsewhere in the archives, an edition sent from Vienna, dated 2 June 1618, provides ample coverage on the so-called Defenestration of Prague, when three Catholic officials were thrown from a top-floor window of Prague Castle by an angry group of Protestant activists. The event is widely believed to have ignited the Thirty Years' War – one of the bloodiest conflicts in European history.

"News at this time was handwritten and exchanged across Europe in what was a lucrative and powerful network," said Dooley. "Who controlled the news controlled the power, and this is a discovery at the very birth of what is today's global news industry.

"In an era of streaming videos, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and around-the-clock news updates sent to smartphones, it is getting harder to remember when news was something one read once or twice a week."

Since the finding, Dooley has been named as one of 12 recipients of the Irish Research Council's Advanced Laureate Awards scheme, providing him with €1 million (approximately £928,000) in funding to further his investigations.

Working alongside the Florence State Archive and the non-profit Medici Archive Project, Dooley and his research team will use a digital platform known as BIA (Building Interactive Archives) to develop new tools that will help organise and analyse the material.

Dooley said: "Our ultimate goal, made feasible for the first time by this funding, is to reconstruct this fascinating news environment of an entire lost world – early modern Europe – at the birth of news."

### HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the history headlines



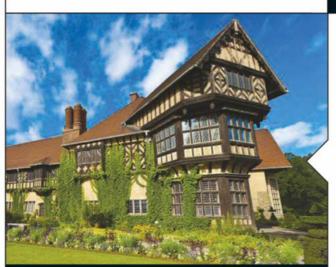
Aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle* leaves the Harland and Wolff shipyard following its completion in 1946

### Titanic shipyard faces uncertain future

The Belfast shipyard responsible for building some of the world's most famous ocean liners has gone into administration, putting 130 jobs at risk. At the time of press, Harland and Wolff's Norwegian parent company was still searching for a buyer, with employees left unpaid. Founded in 1861, the firm is perhaps most famous for constructing the *Titanic* between 1909–12, with the shipyard's iconic gantry cranes becoming scheduled monuments in 2003.

### Archaeologists solve glass shard mystery

A glass shard found in Gloucestershire has been identified as having once formed part of an ornamental 'fish' bottle made near the Black Sea 1,800 years ago. First unearthed at Chedworth Roman Villa in 2017, the fragment was recognised by archaeologists after they spotted its similarity to an intact bottle in the US, which was excavated from a second-century burial site in the Crimea. Experts say the revelation offers new clues about Roman trading networks.

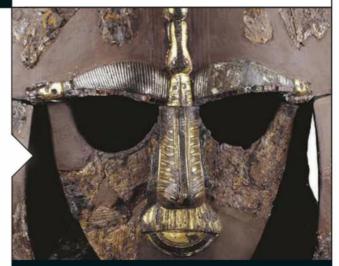


The Hohenzollerns want to reclaim Cecilienhof Palace, where the Potsdam conference took place in 1945

The shard shown alongside an artist's impression of what the original bottle would have looked like

### Prussian heirs launch bid to reclaim treasures

Descendants of the Prussian royal family have appealed to the German state in a bid to reclaim historical artefacts and property confiscated following the collapse of the monarchy in 1918. Led by Georg Friedrich Ferdinand, a great-great-grandchild of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the heirs to the Hohenzollern dynasty have requested the right to reside at Cecilienhof Palace in Brandenburg, which was once a royal property. The two parties are yet to reach an agreement.



The reconstructed Sutton Hoo helmet – one of many treasures buried along with the ship in c625 AD

### Sutton Hoo campaign seeks £1m for replica ship

A crowdfunding initiative has been launched to build a full-size replica of the Anglo-Saxon ship found buried at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, in 1939. The Make Ship Happen campaign is seeking £1m in donations to fund construction of the 90ft vessel, which will undertake a tour of schools once completed. The announcement follows the National Trust's £4m revamp of the Sutton Hoo archaeological site earlier this year, which boasts a new visitor centre and steel ship sculpture.

s there a greater thrill than being able to walk like an Egyptian on the Giza Pyramids Plateau? It's an experience only surpassed when guided by world-famous archaeologist Dr Zahi Hawass on the extraordinary Royal Egypt Tours.

Archaeological Paths' incredible and fascinating tour is an experience normally reserved for royalty, presidents and VIPs – and the only one of its kind to give unprecedented access to some unique sites that few people ever get to see. It also allows you to spend time in the esteemed company of Dr Mostafa Waziri, Egypt's Head of Antiquities, and the former first lady, Mrs Jehan Sadat, in the residence of Egypt's late president Anwar Sadat.

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There is no one better than Dr Zahi Hawass to take you on a journey into the past. For more than 20 years, he has held the keys to many of this ancient land's most incredible antiquities. Dr Hawass will give you a very personal glimpse into his extensive research into the mysteries of Tutankhamun, the search for Nefertiti's grave and work on the pyramid complex at Giza.

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Archaeological Paths is no stranger to offering some very special historical tours – it has been delighting customers since 2003. But this one really is fit for a Pharaoh.

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- Access to the active excavation site of the Tombs of the Pyramid Builders, normally closed to the public
- Five-star luxury accommodation in Giza's best hotels
- A stunning eight-day cruise down the Nile





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### It's a symbolic moment: a primer for the history of America II

In summer 1619, by the steamy creeks of the James river on Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, the General Assembly of Jamestown met in the settlement's

newly built church, the first representative governing body of the English settlers within the future United States. The 400th anniversary of this event was commemorated recently by President Trump, amid bitter demonstrations and boycotts by black legislators.

In more ways than one, it was a very charged moment in American history. And a few weeks later something no less momentous happened. Two battered English privateers reached the Virginia coast escorting a captured Portuguese slave ship carrying the first African slaves to arrive in English America. Seized in the Caribbean, the ship had come from Luanda in the Portuguese colony of Angola, where in 1618–19 the dreadful wars of the *conquista* were underway. Of 350 African prisoners on board, a third had died en route. The English ships took 50 or 60 as captives and left the rest to their fate.

Heirs to buccaneers like Francis Drake and Walter Ralegh, these privateers had made their fortunes attacking Spanish and Portuguese ships, and had no qualms about dealing in slaves. At the end of August, they sold them in Virginia "at the best and easiest rates they could". In September, more followed. They are recorded in the General Muster of Virginia the following year: "Indians in the service of several planters: 4; Negroes in the service of several planters: 32." Living in English settler households, these captive Angolans were "the most proper and cheap instruments for this plantation that could be".

So 1619 – 400 years ago – was the de facto beginning of the enslavement of Africans in what would become the United States. Slavery and legislated racial prejudice evolved in Virginia over the next half century, but in the first few decades it was still possible for Africans who escaped bondage to establish themselves and their families as free planters. In the 1660s, for example, 10 men and three women are listed as free households. Among them was Anthony Johnson, a black planter and former indentured servant who had arrived in 1619. His later life with his wife, Mary – "a Negro woman" – and his family, can be traced in plantations along the eastern edge of Virginia into Maryland, where Anthony died in the late 1660s or 1670, and where his grandson John named a farm after Anthony's native Angola. What we wouldn't give for the memoirs of these black 17th-century pioneers.

But they lived on the edge. They were the exceptions. The early laws of the Virginia colony were discriminatory: there was, for instance, to be no mixing of races. In 1640, the early modern conception of slavery was formalised in the John Punch case, when an African indentured servant tried to run away and was sentenced to serve as a slave for the rest of his life. Slavery was entrenched in Virginia by 1660, expanding quickly across the Atlantic coast and the Caribbean. In 1698, the Virginia parliament opened up the slave trade to all Englishmen. Through this act, and the drawing up of a slave code, the practice was institutionalised. In the Chesapeake Bay area, by the mid-18th century, slaves made up half the population of the new capital, Williamsburg, while in Virginia they constituted a large majority. Founding fathers Jefferson, Madison and Washington did nothing to alter the situation.

So this year's 400th anniversary is a powerfully symbolic moment: a primer for the history of America. The beginning of the British empire and the root of the United States, it marks too the start of the destruction of the indigenous peoples, who in Virginia were wiped out within a century. It takes us back to the beginning of the US's slavery narrative, and the source of much of the drama unfolding today. Slavery's corrosive legacy—the deliberate and systematic discrimination against African-Americans through segregation, mass incarceration, prejudicial housing and employment law, and educational disadvantage—has afflicted the States ever since. It is an ongoing source of shame that threatens the whole body politic of the republic. We should not forget 1619. As Thomas Jefferson

himself a slave owner – once said: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free... it expects what never was, and never will be."

### MORE FROM US

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# ANNVERSARIES

**DOMINIC SANDBROOK** highlights events that took place in October in history

**19 OCTOBER 1469** 

### Ferdinand and Isabella tie the knot

Celebrated marriage paves the way for a united Spain

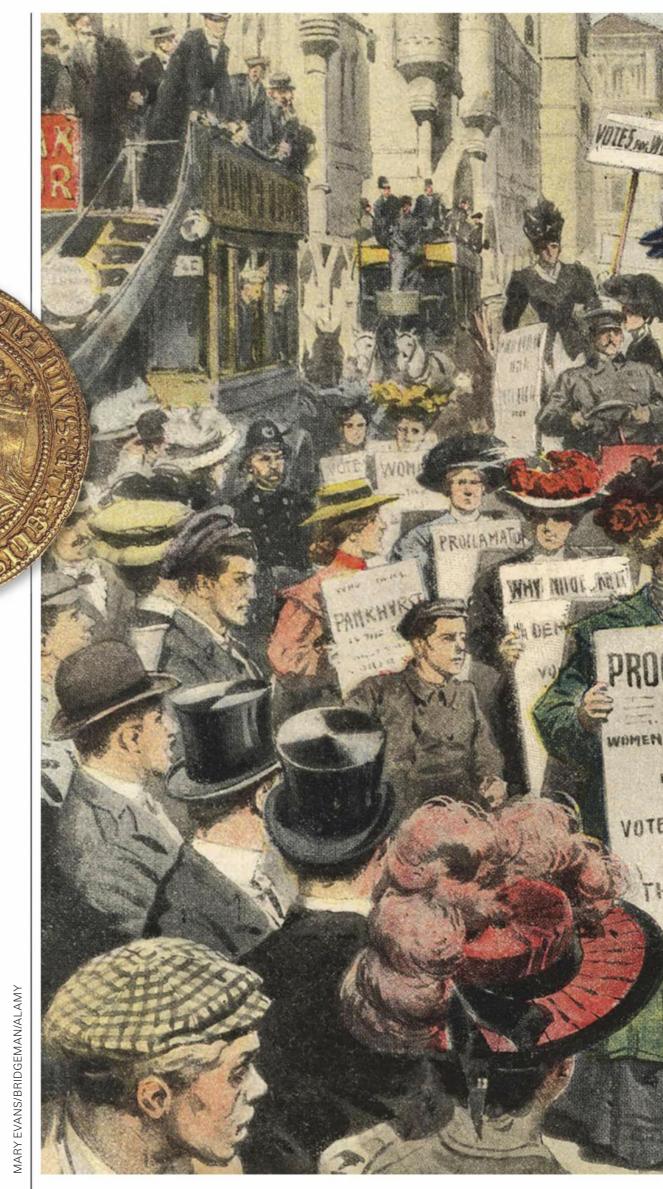
t was October 1469, and in Valladolid ■ the 18-year-old Princess Isabella, heir to the Castilian throne, waited for the man with whom she would share her life. With Castilian politics a maelstrom of intrigue, the negotiations had proceeded for months in secret. But on about 12 October, the teenage princess's second cousin, Ferdinand of Aragon, rode in secret into Valladolid – and for the first time, one of history's most

Ferdinand and Isabella depicted on a c15th-century gold coin

celebrated couples laid eyes on one another.

Both Ferdinand and Isabella were delighted with what they saw. For his part, the young Aragonese was a model Renaissance prince, brave, courteous and dashing. Isabella, meanwhile, was famously beautiful: "The handsomest lady," one witness said, "that I ever beheld." No doubt some of this was propaganda. Even so, observers agreed that the first meeting was a great success, auguring well for the creation of a single Spanish monarchy.

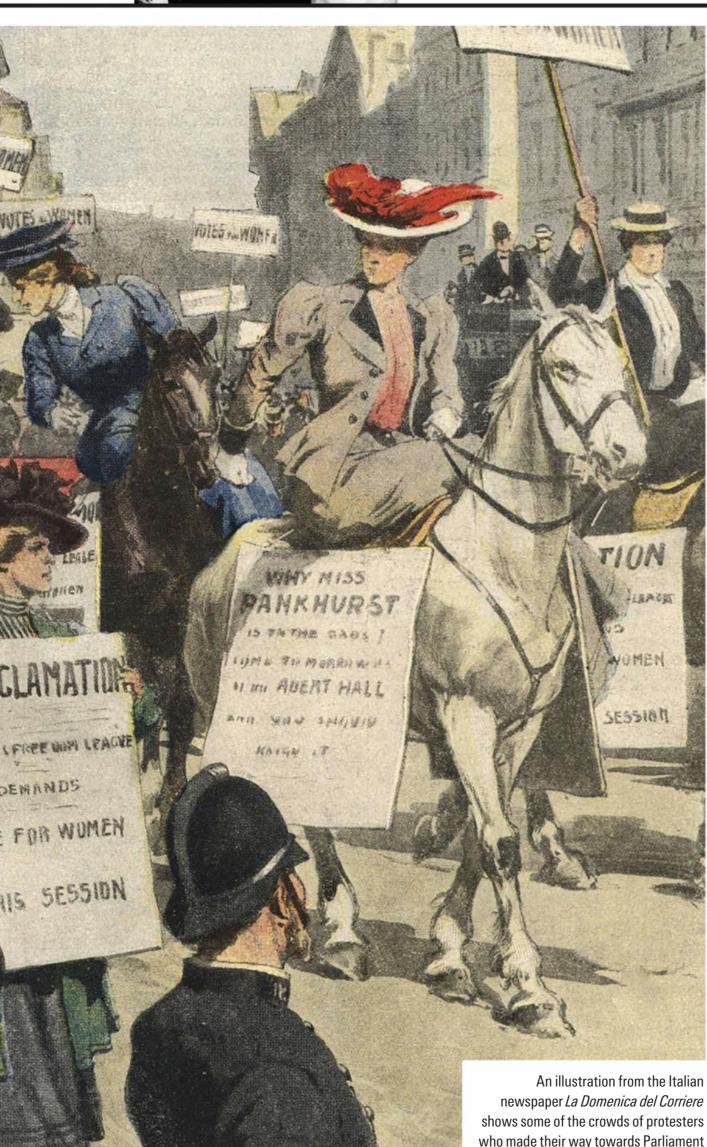
On 19 October, roughly a week after they had met, the royal couple were married at Valladolid's Vivero Palace. Strapped for cash, they borrowed money from their aristocratic friends to pay for the ceremony, and some 2,000 people reportedly looked on as Ferdinand swore to uphold the laws of Castile. The royal couple even produced a papal bull, signed by Pope Pius II, to get around the awkward fact that they were so closely related. That it was a complete forgery was beside the point. The wedding was a triumph, and in that moment a united Spain was born.





#### **20 OCTOBER 1968**

Jacqueline Kennedy, widow of the murdered US president, astounds the world by marrying the Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis



### **13 OCTOBER 1908**

### Suffragettes try to storm House of Commons

'Rush' arranged by Pankhurst and WSPU results in 36 arrests

omen's Social and Political Union," began the flyer. "VOTES FOR WOMEN. Men and women – help the suffragettes to rush the House of Commons on Tuesday evening, 13 October 1908, at 7:30."

After years of escalating suffragette protests, the idea of a 'rush' on the Commons had been devised by WSPU leaders Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughter Christabel and their friend Flora Drummond. There was nothing secret about the plan: not only had Christabel shown the flyer to a policeman, but on Sunday 11 October, they addressed a rally in Trafalgar Square, urging their listeners to join them in storming the Commons chamber.

The next day, the three leaders were served with a court summons, demanding that they report to Bow Street police station. But they did not respond to the summons; when they returned to the WSPU offices at 6pm on the Tuesday, police arrested them.

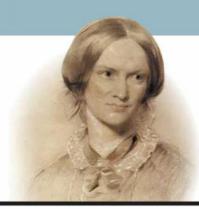
The 'rush' itself was just as dramatic as its architects had hoped. "Riotous Scenes at Westminster," gasped the next day's *Times*. As the press reported, some 60,000 people had assembled in Parliament Square, with "determined bands of women" leading the charge against the police lines guarding the Palace of Westminster. Not all the crowd were militant suffragettes. One observer wrote that there were plenty of male hecklers too, as well as "curiosity-mongers who were fascinated by the fight although without interest for its cause".

In the chaos, some 24 women and 12 men were arrested, while another 10 were taken to hospital. But the crowd never managed to break through into the Commons as the Pankhursts had hoped. Only one woman made it into the chamber: the Labour MP Keir Hardie's secretary, Margaret Travers Symons. She shouted: "Leave off discussing the children's question and give votes to women first!" before the attendants ushered her away.

Square, London, as the suffragettes tried

to force their way into the Commons

In a new humiliation for the beleaguered Edward II, **Scotland's Robert the Bruce comfortably defeats an English army** at the battle of Old Byland



**16 OCTOBER 1847 An unknown author called Currer Bell** – actually the young Charlotte Brontë (pictured) – publishes her debut novel, *Jane Eyre* 



### **6 OCTOBER 1973**

### Egypt and Syria strike against an unprepared Israel

Yom Kippur War is nations' revenge for humiliation in 1967

aturday, 6 October 1973: Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Across Israel, it was a day of fasting and prayer. The shops had closed. Public transport had been shut down. Televisions were dark, radios silent.

That afternoon, Israel's adversaries made their move. Six years after their humiliation in the June War of 1967, Egypt and Syria were itching for revenge. For months they had drawn up their plans, and the Israelis suspected nothing. Even that morning, after a report from a double agent reached Jerusalem, the Israeli defence minister, the veteran Moshe Dayan, was not convinced that the Arabs would dare to attempt such a stunning surprise assault. The chief of general staff, David Elazar, urged Israeli prime minister Golda Meir to launch a preemptive strike, just in case Egypt and Syria really were going to attack. But she said no.

A few hours later the assault began. At two o'clock, some 200 Egyptian aircraft screamed across the border into Israeli-occupied Sinai, while, hundreds of miles to the north, several

Syrian divisions began to move into the Golan Heights. Soon air raid sirens were going off all over Israel. Radios spluttered back into life, broadcasting urgent warnings of imminent attack. Across the country, the word went out for troops to return to their units.

All the time, thousands of Egyptian infantry were moving across the Suez Canal. Within half an hour, they had raised their national flag on the eastern bank; within three hours, they had punched five bridgeheads into the Sinai. All that evening, and into the next morning, Egyptian tanks and armoured vehicles thundered across 12 makeshift bridges. It was one of the most staggering attacks in history – and, at least at first, a sensational triumph.

In the end, the Israelis managed to push their opponents back. But Middle Eastern politics would never be the same again.



A woodcut shows the damage done to Babylon after its conquest by the Persians in 539 BC

### **12 OCTOBER 539 BC**

### Babylon falls to Cyrus the Great

The great Mesopotamian city comes under Persian control

B abylon! For millennia the name had the ring of wealth, splendour and power: the city of Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar, the Ishtar Gate and the Hanging Gardens.

But in the autumn of 539 BC, Babylon was at bay. After years of retreat, the Babylonians had been pushed back by the Persian king Cyrus the Great, and at the battle of Opis, on the banks of the Tigris, Cyrus won an overwhelming victory. Now, Babylon lay open before him. What happened next, however, remains mysterious.

According to the evidence of local inscriptions, Cyrus's army entered Babylon on 12 October without a fight, let alone a siege, probably because the city's rulers reckoned the war was lost and it was better to appease their new master. But the Greek historian Herodotus tells a much more exciting story. The city, he explained, was guarded by impassable walls, which crossed the river Euphrates. Cyrus ordered his sappers to drain off the river into a nearby lake, so that its level fell "about to the middle of a man's thigh". Then he sent his army along the river bed, into the heart of the city. As luck would have it, Herodotus added, the Babylonians were celebrating a religious festival. So even as the Persians crept towards them, "they went on dancing and rejoicing during this time until they learnt the truth only too well".

Either way, the result was the same: Cyrus was the master of Babylon. It belonged to his descendants for the next 200 years.

**Dominic Sandbrook** is a historian, author and broadcaster. His latest book, *Who Dares Wins: Britain*, *1979 1982*, will be published by Allen Lane on 26 September

### WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER...

### The proclamation of the People's Republic of China

BY RANA MITTER

**ON 1 OCTOBER 1949,** 70 years ago, Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist party, stood in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace at the heart of Beijing and announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Earlier, he had declared: "The Chinese people have stood up." Mao set China on the path to its status today as a global economic and political giant – but not without several near-fatal turns along the way.

For more than three decades beforehand, the country had been constantly at war. In the 1920s, Chinese military leaders fought each other for control. In 1937, China was attacked by Japan, plunging it into a conflict that would kill more than 10 million people and end only with the Americans dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Then, for four years, Mao Zedong's Communists fought a civil war with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists for control of the country. Finally, Chiang was defeated and fled to the island of Taiwan. Mao arrived in Beijing, the capital of the new state, and made his historic proclamation.

Seven decades on, the state that he founded is still there. That proclamation deserves to be remembered for reasons positive and negative. When Mao declared that the Chinese people had "stood up", he signalled the end of the period when foreign countries could use their power to seize Chinese territory or force it to give special privileges to westerners and Japanese. China had finally become fully sovereign under Chiang Kai-shek in 1943, but it was under Mao that the new state was able to act as a beacon for other countries that were still fighting for freedom.

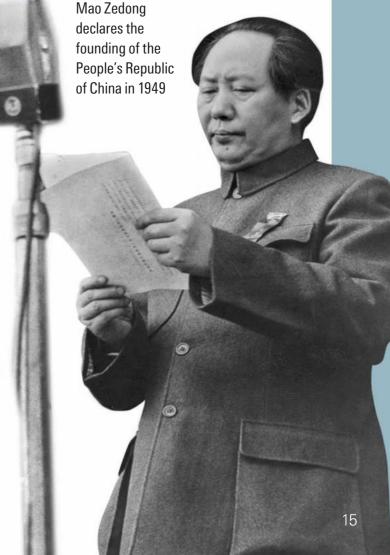
India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam were just some of the nations that gained independence in the decades after the war, and they all looked to Mao's China as an exemplar. Regardless of your opinion of Mao, it is worth remembering how rare it was in the post-Second World War period to have an Asian society choosing its own destinated.

its own destiny. Yet his regime also became a byword for immense cruelty. Mao's disastrous economic experiment, the Great Leap Forward, led to the death by starvation of more than 20 million people. The Cultural Revolution of the 1960s killed fewer but left China's society wrecked. Even today, in the China that brings together authoritarian politics, consumerism and high technology, it is worth remembering the rage – and hope – kindled when Mao declared his revolutionary state in 1949. **H** 

9,9

Rana Mitter is professor of the history and politics of modern China at the University of Oxford

## Asian countries looked to Mao's China as an exemplar





### SINCE BEING AWARDED A SUPPLEMENTAL ROYAL CHARTER 100 YEARS AGO, THE BRITISH RED CROSS HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

an you imagine a British Red Cross without most of its UK services? Without its natural disaster emergency response? A British Red Cross that doesn't operate 365 days a year, every year?

What you're picturing is much closer to how the charity worked when it was first founded in 1870. Only operating during wartime, the organisation provided vital relief to those affected by conflict around the world. But as time went on, it became increasingly clear that even more could be done.

During the First World War, more than 90,000 men and women volunteered with the British Red Cross, providing support

across the UK and beyond. Then, in the winter of 1918/19, just as the war had come to an end, the Spanish flu epidemic spread rapidly across the world, killing around 50 million people – nearly three times the number of people that had died during the war.

### BEYOND THE WAR

The Spanish flu was a stark demonstration that the biggest threats to humanity do not always come from conflict. In 1919, the British Red Cross saw the great potential of its volunteers – tens of thousands of whom had completed first aid and other training during the war – to continue to help

those affected by crises now that the war was over. On 12 December 1919, King George V awarded the British Red Cross a supplemental Royal Charter, extending its objectives to include "the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world".

The Charter forms the basis for most of the work the British Red Cross still does today, especially in the UK. Everything from mobility aid loans and first aid training and response, to emergencies like floods and natural disasters at home and around the world, is part of what the British Red Cross does because of that one, very important, document.



### LEAVE YOUR OWN LEGACY

The work carried out by the British Red Cross is as essential today as it was in 1919. It's thanks to the generosity of the charity's supporters that it can always be ready to help those in crisis, whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street. By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave your own legacy and ensure the British Red Cross can continue to support vulnerable people for many years to come.



For more information about supporting the British Red Cross with a gift in your will and the Free Will scheme, visit redcross.org.uk/freewill or call 0300 500 0401



### Japan's Ainu people have faced an overlooked history of repression

Next summer, the torch relay of the Tokyo Olympics will make its way across the archipelago of Japan. One of the places the Olympic cavalcade will

stop at is a new museum in Shiraoi on Hokkaido, the most northerly of the four main Japanese islands. The National Ainu Museum has been established to celebrate a history that the Japanese have kept hidden for almost 150 years.

The people we think of as the Japanese, the Wajin, are not and have never been the only ethnic group living in Japan. Hokkaido is the traditional home to a forgotten people: the Ainu, who have their own distinct language, religion, diet, dress and way of life. They are also a people who have faced an overlooked history of repression.

In the 19th century, isolationist Japan faced a choice: either modernise or risk domination by the encroaching powers of Russia, Britain and the US. In the Meiji restoration, which began in 1868, the traditional shoguns were swept aside and a reforming, centralising government headed by the emperor took power. Japan embarked upon on a programme of modernisation, which included the colonisation of Hokkaido, much of which had hitherto been an autonomous region.

In 1869, Japan annexed the island and, in the same years in which thousands of Americans headed west, thousands of Wajin Japanese migrated north. Their task was to open up the interior of Hokkaido and to develop

the island's natural resources – lumber, farmland and coal. The government gave the pioneers horses and offered them instruction in the farming techniques then being imported into Japan from America. Hokkaido was going to be both modern and Japanese.

The Ainu, with their facial tattoos, hunting traditions and animist religion, didn't fit with this vision. And they found themselves subjected to a programme of Japanisation. They were given Wajin names and forbidden to speak their own language, to practise their custom of animal sacrifice, or to mark their bodies with tattoos. The government appropriated Ainu hunting grounds and tried, largely without success, to force them to become farmers. This programme of assimilation was enshrined in law with the passing of the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act in 1899. The new legislation eliminated traditional land rights and automatically converted the Ainu into Japanese citizens. Japan thus presented itself to the 20th century as an ethnically homogeneous nation.

By 1964, when Japan hosted its first Olympics, the Ainu were all but forgotten. Japanese children growing up in Hokkaido knew nothing of its indigenous past, and at school were taught only the history of the Wajin Japanese. Even those of Ainu ancestry were often unaware of their heritage, because older relatives kept it secret from them. As late as 1986, Japan's prime minister was claiming that "there are no ethnic minorities in Japan".

But not all the Ainu gave up on their culture. A few demanded recognition and looked for support from the

UN Committee on Indigenous Rights. Finally, in 1997, Japan recognised the Ainu as an "independent ethnic group" and passed the Ainu Cultural Promotion Law. More recently, the government accorded the Ainu 'indigenous people' status, which should help to protect and to sustain Ainu culture. When the Ainu museum opens next year, it will be a very public acknowledgement of a history too long hidden.

David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester, and the presenter of several BBC documentaries

ВВС



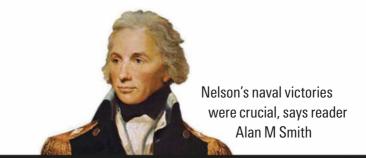
**Oppressed by settlers** 

Members of Japan's Ainu people, pictured in 1910. The Ainus' culture was almost wiped out, but has recently enjoyed a resurgence, thanks in part to the work of activists

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### LETTERS

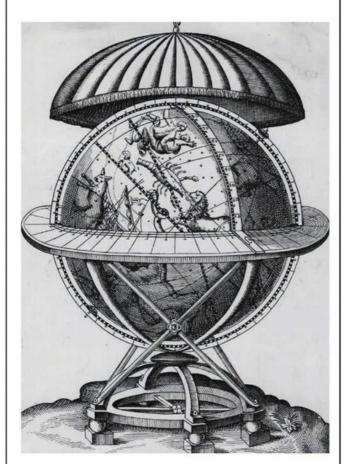


### **LETTER OF THE MONTH**

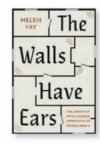
### A flat-Earth canard?

David Simmonds (*Letters*, August) refers to the canard that the Earth was thought to be flat before the Reformation. Study of the history of astronomy makes it apparent that educated people knew that the Earth was more or less spherical millennia ago. Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the globe around the start of the second century BC (we don't know whether anyone did it earlier), and Aristotle gave logical reasons why it was clear that the Earth was a globe.

Dispute as to whether the Earth or the sun was at the centre of the planets also goes back into antiquity. Even the Genesis story was thought by some churchmen to be an obvious legend, analysis of the text itself being the basis for that opinion. There's also a reference to the belief that the world is round in the Book of Psalms. **Dr NP Hudd**, Kent



A c1590 celestial globe, designed by Tycho Brahe. Scholars have known that the Earth is round for millennia, says reader NP Hudd



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is Helen Fry's **The Walls Have Ears**. Read the review on page 83

### **Visions of a Dark Age**

I write in response to *Britain's Green Activists* (September). An apparently now forgotten green campaigner of the Victorian period was the novelist Richard Jefferies, best known for his book *Bevis*. He also wrote *After London, Wild England*, published in 1885, which is an enthralling, though sadly unfinished, novel in which London has collapsed beneath a swamp of filth and pollution, spreading a fetid lake over the south of England. Whether this scenario will be followed by a retrogressive Dark Age society the unfinished work does not reveal.

Dr Lucy Matthews, Cornwall

### Richard III and the bricklayer

The princes in the Tower feature (September) does not mention at least two other theories on the boys' fate. It is highly likely that their murder was organised by Margaret Beaufort, Henry Tudor's mother. She had the motive, the opportunity and the means to do it, and would have done absolutely anything to help her son onto the throne. She was in London, she knew people at the Tower, and she could have simply hired a couple of assassins.

Another possibility is that the young Edward V died of natural causes. It is a fact that he was being treated daily in the Tower by a doctor, John Argentine, for an unspecified illness. After Edward died, it is suggested that his brother, Richard, the young Duke of York, was taken away and brought up in a safe house in the country – and that, after the battle of Bosworth, Richard's henchman Lord Lovell took him to Colchester Abbey where he was enrolled as a lay monk and taught to be a bricklayer. Henry VII visited Colchester on his progresses more times than any other town of its size – presumably to check the young man wasn't becoming the focus of a Yorkist plot.

After the monasteries' dissolution, the theory goes, Richard turned up at Eastwell in Kent where he helped a local lord build a house. He revealed his identity to his master but begged him not to tell anyone until after his death. He died in 1550 and the tomb of Richard Plantagenet still stands in Eastwell churchyard.

This theory must, I believe, carry some considerable weight. It comes from the late David Baldwin – the very historian who, as long ago as 1986, predicted that we would find the remains of Richard III under a Leicester car park.

Tony Boullemier, Northampton

### Too little, too late?

The Netherlands' state-run rail company's decision to pay Holocaust reparations (*News*, September) is a cheap stunt. They have waited 74 years until relatively few survivors of the Holocaust are left and then they make their big offer of compensation. Why did they not do this straight after the war, or better still, why didn't they resist the Nazis in the first place and refuse to cooperate? Paying reparations does not bring back murdered people, whose only 'crime' was that they were Jewish or political opponents of the Nazis.

Danny Glick, London

### An alternative route

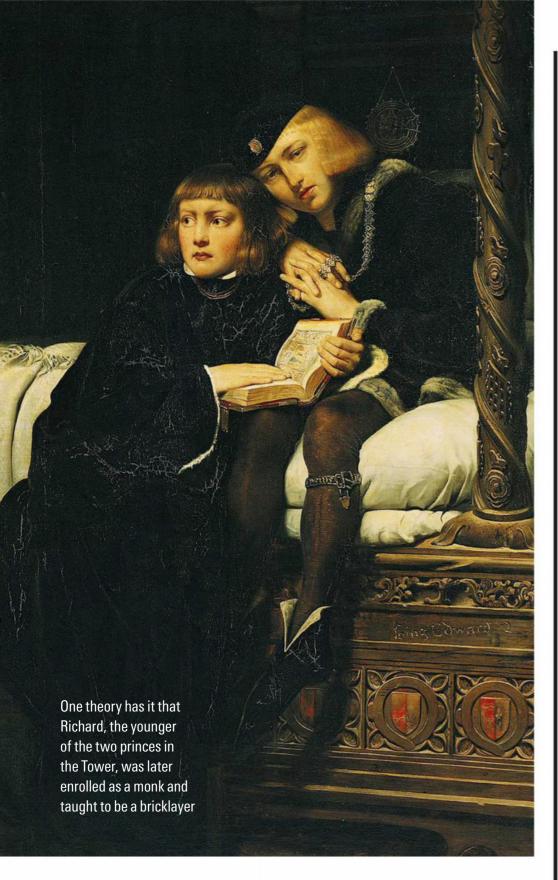
In the *News* section of your July issue, you mention a ceremony in Utah honouring the 150th anniversary of the completion of what you refer to as the "first transcontinental railroad" in 1869. Yet I would argue that this was not the first one, but the second. The actual first transcontinental railroad was in Panama - completed between Colon and Panama City – parallel to where the later canal was constructed. Opened in 1855, the railroad is still there and in operation, carrying freight and passengers between the Caribbean and Pacific sides of the Americas. It's only about 50 miles long, but still transcontinental. Thanks for a great publication! Margaret Rioux, Massachusetts

### Trafalgar did turn the tide!

Both your August cover title, *Trafalgar*: A Futile Victory?, and Sam Willis's article Trafalgar: An Overrated Victory? are flawed. Contrary to the claim that "Nelson's triumph didn't turn the tide on Napoleon", this overwhelming victory over the Combined Fleet was in fact the beginning of the end for Napoleon (as he later admitted on St Helena). The Royal Navy then controlled the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Channel, North Sea and the Baltic, strangling French trade and resources, just as Jutland starved Germany in the First World War.

In destroying a Spanish fleet at Cape St Vincent (1797), a French fleet at the Nile (1798) and the Combined Fleet at Trafalgar (1805), the Royal Navy removed or captured an entire generation of the enemy's able seamen and officers.

It is equally unfounded to claim that Cuthbert Collingwood thought "Trafalgar's identity was uncertain". In his report to the Admiralty on 22 October 1805, the day after the battle (and published in *The Times* on 7 November), Collingwood described the



navy's "complete victory". He added: "After such a victory... the conclusion says more on the subject than I have language to express," and added in his general order that the victory was "for the great benefits to our country and mankind". No uncertainty in these words.

Alan M Smith, Surrey

### Correction

• In a caption on page 44 of August's issue (Trafalgar: An Overrated Victory?) we wrote that the "Dutch fleet" was destroyed at the battle of Copenhagen. It should of course have read "Danish fleet". Thanks to the many readers who pointed out this error.

### WRITE TO US

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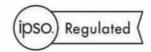
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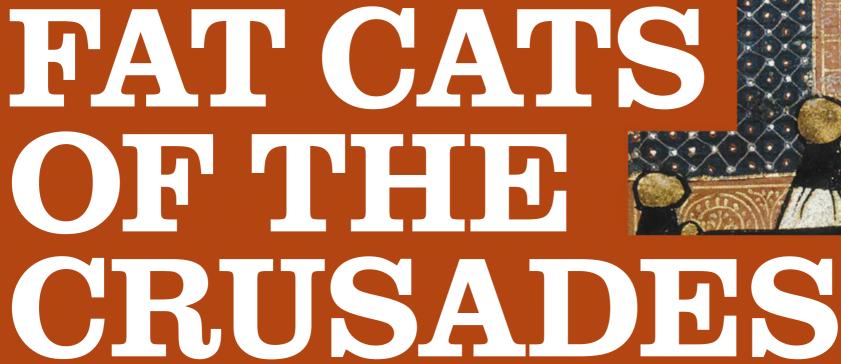
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Waging holy war in the Middle Ages could be a lucrative business. **Dan Jones** tells the story of the crusaders who returned from the front line with their souls cleansed — and their pockets full

### A bountiful battle

Crusaders defeat the Turks at Dorylaeum in 1097, as shown in a 14th-century illumination. While the victors may have believed that their triumph had earned them a place in heaven, it benefited them materially as well: they were soon looting the Turkish camp and plundering the bodies of the dead





### **Cover story Fat cat crusaders**

n the morning of 1 July 1097, tens of thousands of Christian pilgrim soldiers of the First Crusade scrambled to make a desperate stand against a horde

of advancing Turkish horsemen.

The crusaders were only a few days into a three-month march through 800 miles of hostile terrain when the Turks took them by surprise, attacking early in the morning while the crusaders were still in camp, near an old Roman settlement in Anatolia called Dorylaeum. One eyewitness to the battle, a French priest called Fulcher of Chartres, recalled the terror he felt when the Turks descended, as he and his companions "huddled together like sheep in a fold, trembling and frightened". The fighting raged for six hours until eventually – miraculously – it became clear that the Turks did not have the numbers to prevail.

The Christian cavalry, commanded by a wily Norman nobleman called Bohemond of Taranto, held the tormentors at bay for long enough to allow reinforcements to arrive from several miles away. These fresh troops forced the Turks into a disorderly retreat, which soon became a rout. After it was finished, the crusaders buried their dead and gave thanks for their victory.

The battle of Dorylaeum was remembered for years afterwards as a demonstration of God's approval for crusading and an example of the first crusaders' extraordinary resilience and motivation. It was also remembered as a day that had proven unexpectedly lucrative. One writer recorded the slogan shouted from man to man on the front line at Dorylaeum: "Stand fast all together," they had yelled as the Turks swooped, "trusting in Christ and in the victory of the Holy Cross. Today, please God, you will all gain much booty!"

This had proved prophetic. For not only did the crusaders record an inspirational military victory; they also gleefully looted the camp of the Turkish leader, Qilij Arslan, and enriched themselves by plundering the bodies of the 3,000 enemy soldiers who had been killed. They had trusted in Christ and, just as promised, gained much booty. Their pithy, two-pronged war cry captured the two great preoccupations of the crusader age: faith and gold.

### A hotchpotch of enemies

Most historians date the crusades from the preaching of the First Crusade by Pope Urban II at Clermont in 1095 to the fall of the last Islamic strongholds in al-Andalus (southern Spain) in 1492. They were a series



of interconnected Christian 'holy wars' fought against a wide variety of foes.

The First Crusade was called to aid Greek Christians of the Byzantine empire in their wars against the Turks of Anatolia, and subsequently to seize Jerusalem from its rule by Fatimid Shia caliphs based in Cairo. But over the generations many more crusades were raised – against Arabs, Turks and Kurds, Sunni and Shia Muslims, Berbers from north Africa, pagans in Latvia, Cathars in southern France, Mongols in eastern Europe. War was also waged on a hotchpotch of other real and perceived enemies of Christ – including both Byzantine and Holy Roman Emperors and several Christian kings.

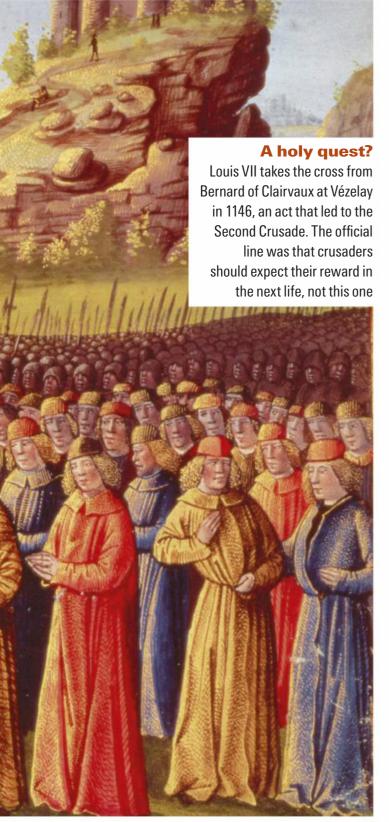
The purpose of all these crusades was ostensibly twofold. Popes authorised warfare in Christ's name because they thought it was their duty to protect Christian people and lands from non-believers. Ordinary medieval people took crusade vows, sewed distinctive cloth crosses to their garments and joined crusader armies because they were promised that in doing so they would earn forgiveness for their earthly sins, thereby easing their passage into heaven.

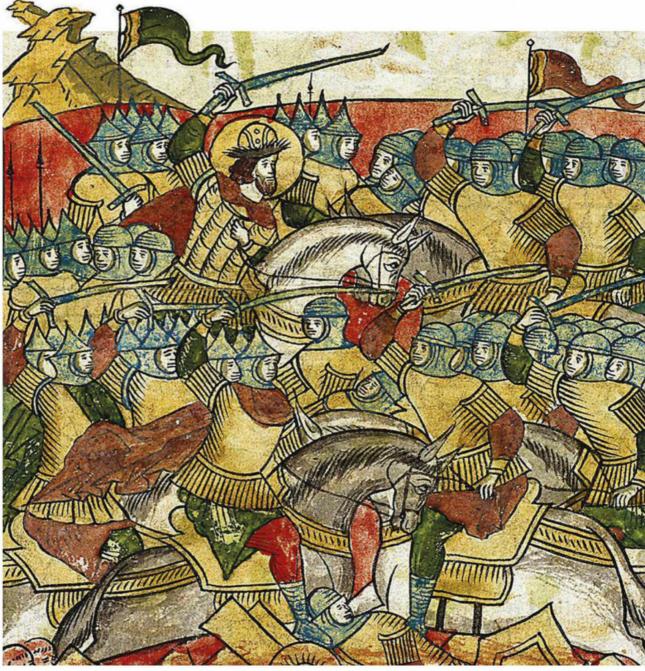
These two aims were repeated throughout

# The victors' two-pronged war cry captured the two great preoccupations of the crusader age: faith and gold

the history of crusading. When Urban II launched the First Crusade, chroniclers recalled that he spoke of avenging insults to "the sanctuary of God" (ie Jerusalem) by declaring "wars which contain the glorious reward of martyrdom". The great Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux helped preach the Second Crusade, which began in 1147, calling upon the knights of western Europe to join "a battle [where] you may fight without danger, where it is glory to conquer and gain to die". When Pope Gregory VIII preached the Third Crusade in 1187, after Jerusalem had fallen to the sultan Saladin, he asked

BRIDGEMAN





**Cold war** A 16th-century depiction of the battle on the Ice, fought between a crusader army and the Republic of Novgorod in 1242. Crusaders waged war in locations as diverse as southern France, Latvia and the Middle East

crusaders to be "courageous, because it is better to perish in a fight than to behold... the profanation of holy things".

There were, by contrast, very few occasions when churchmen encouraged crusaders to think of material gain. In fact, crusade preachers more often spoke of the miserable hardships of crusading, the expenses that would be incurred by those who joined the movement, and the necessity of, as Gregory VIII put it, rejecting "luxury and ostentation and wearing simple clothes as would befit people doing penance for their sins". The official line, at least, was that crusaders were expected to comport themselves humbly and expect their reward in the next world rather than on earth.

### **Combining profit with piety**

Yet throughout its history, crusading was founded on doublethink. The truth was that, just as those men who called the crusades managed to square Christ's peaceable teachings with the idea of waging wars of z conquest in his name, so too were they quietly relaxed about the prospect of crusaders going off to fight as penitent pilgrims conquest in his name, so too were they while still hoping to come home with their

pockets full, as well as their souls cleansed.

In the decades before the crusades began, several western writers noted that Christian warriors thought about their personal wealth at least as much as their spiritual health. Describing trade between Christians and pagan peoples of the Baltic in the 1070s, the chronicler Adam of Bremen wrote that "men cared as much for [trading] furs as for their immortal souls". Around the same time, in the southern Mediterranean, a writer called Geoffrey Malaterra was describing the Norman conquest of Arab Sicily; he noted that these Normans attacked Sicily's Muslim rulers not just for religious purposes but for "material benefit". Eleventh-century kings who conquered lands from Muslim rulers in Spain used their war spoils to make large donations to the Cluniac monastic order. The instinct to combine profit with piety predated crusading, and when the church decided to institutionalise war on non-Christians, it survived intact.

Of course, not all crusaders got rich. Many who joined the First Crusade were maimed, killed or bankrupted themselves due to the expense of the journey. Yet there



It's a steal

This enamelled Byzantine liturgical book, encrusted with pearls, was almost certainly looted during the Fourth Crusade (1202-04)



were a significant number of others who did very well out of the enterprise. When the first crusaders entered Jerusalem in July 1099 and put the city to the sword, one of the Norman leaders, Tancred of Hauteville, sent his personal bodyguards to the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), where they spent two days relieving the shrine of the Dome of the Rock (known by the crusaders as the Temple of the Lord) of its most precious ornaments.

Tancred pilfered what one chronicler called "an incomparable quantity of gold and silver". He wasn't alone. All over the city, crusaders seized "gold and silver, horses and mules and houses full of all sorts of goods". So much for Christ's plea to "sell what you have, give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven" (Matthew 19:21). The crusaders in 1099 put that firmly out of their minds.

From this point on, the possibility of financial reward remained one of several strong motivators for crusaders. In 1107–11 the first king to travel from Europe on crusade was Sigurd I of Norway. The sagas

that tell of his epic journey to Jerusalem, via Muslim-held cities of modern Spain and Portugal are full of gleeful references to the amount of booty Sigurd's sailors seized along the way. When Sigurd left the Holy Land, his ships were laden with so much treasure that they displayed it on their masts and sails, where it caught the light to dazzling effect.

Many more followed suit. In the aftermath of 1099, four crusader states were established along the Palestinian and Syrian coast: the kingdom of Jerusalem, the counties of Edessa and Tripoli and the principality of Antioch. They offered estates to be farmed, villages to be taxed, port cities to be developed and merchant routes connecting the Mediterranean world with the faraway markets of India and China. Very quickly, the more resourceful powers of western Europe realised how much potential lay in these acquisitions. They made a beeline to the east to carve out their own roles in this exciting

new world, establishing lord-

ships, bishoprics and trading stations.

Prominent in this were the three great trading cities of northern Italy: Genoa, Pisa and Venice. All three possessed significant naval power, which they could lend to crusader campaigns to conquer or defend coastal cities in the east, such as Acre, Tyre and Beirut. They were keen to establish their reputations as prominent members of the Christian world. And they each knew that if they engaged with crusading, they would be rewarded not only with the forgiveness of sins promised by successive popes, but also in economic terms.

Few episodes illustrate this more effectively than the siege of Tyre – a stoutly defended

city in modern Lebanon – which took place in 1124. More than 100 Venetian ships, commanded by the doge [duke] of Venice, Domenico Michiel, sailed to the east to take part in the siege. Their presence was vital to Tyre's capture and their reward was quite magnificent: a third of the

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Spoils of war These gilded bronze horses were plundered from Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade and brought back to Venice as booty. They are now located at St Mark's Basilica

Across the city crusaders seized "gold and silver, horses and mules, and houses full of all sorts of goods"

city's revenues were granted to the Venetians, and a self-governing Venetian trading colony was established, with its own laws, regulations and tax exemptions.

Tyre would remain in Christian hands for more than 160 years, and during that time the republic of Venice profited handsomely. This was by no means unique. In every major city up and down the coast, Italian merchant colonies were a familiar sight, their willingness to pour investment into the crusading cause amply and visibly rewarded.

### **Conquer and prosper**

Needless to say, the tension between crusaders' dedication to the "victory of the holy Cross" and the pursuit of "booty" could have unpleasant and even fatal consequences for those on the receiving end. The most notorious example of this, perhaps, occurred in the Fourth Crusade of 1202-04 and once again involved the republic of Venice.

The citizens of Venice agreed to build – at great cost – a massive fleet to transport the armies of the Fourth Crusade to Egypt, where they planned to conquer the wealthy city of Alexandria. In the end, however, the crusading fleet diverted to the Christian cities of Zara (modern Zadar) and Constantinople. Both of these were treated savagely, and Constantinople was pillaged, to 

profit of Venice. Visitors to St Mark's basilica can still see four magnificent gilded bronze statues of horses which were taken from Constantinople at that time.

Venice was hardly a lone villain. Throughout the 13th century, bitter complaints were levelled at the international 'military orders' of religious warriors - Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic knights - who were sworn to live lives of austere, pious hardship, devoting all their efforts to the crusade. It was very often muttered that, far from being poor knights of Christ, the members of these orders enjoyed lives of great wealth and comfort, thanks to their broad-ranging tax exemptions and the lavish donations they received from their supporters.

In a sense, this was quite true. The Teutonic knights profited handsomely from their deployment around the Baltic, where they fought a perpetual crusade to clear pagans from the land and claim it for themselves and other Christian settlers. The Templars, meanwhile, were brought down in 1307–12, in part because of the sheer envy that their vast wealth aroused in the mind of the French king Philip IV.

It is important to reiterate that not everyone who went on crusade during the Middle Ages came home rich. Many lost everything, including their lives. At the same time, few crusaders were motivated solely by one factor. Humans are complicated, and crusading bound together passionately held Christian faith with a real belief in the need to defeat Christ's enemies and atone for earthly sins.

Yet in the cocktail of reasons for crusading often lay a base but timeless human instinct: the desire to get rich quick.

**Dan Jones**' latest book, *Crusaders: An Epic History* of the Wars for the Holy Lands, is published by Head of Zeus in September. He will be discussing the crusades on our podcast (historyextra.com/ podcast) and at our History Weekends (historyextra.com/events)

### **PRIZE FIGHTERS**

Three money-mad crusaders

### THE NORSE PLUNDERER

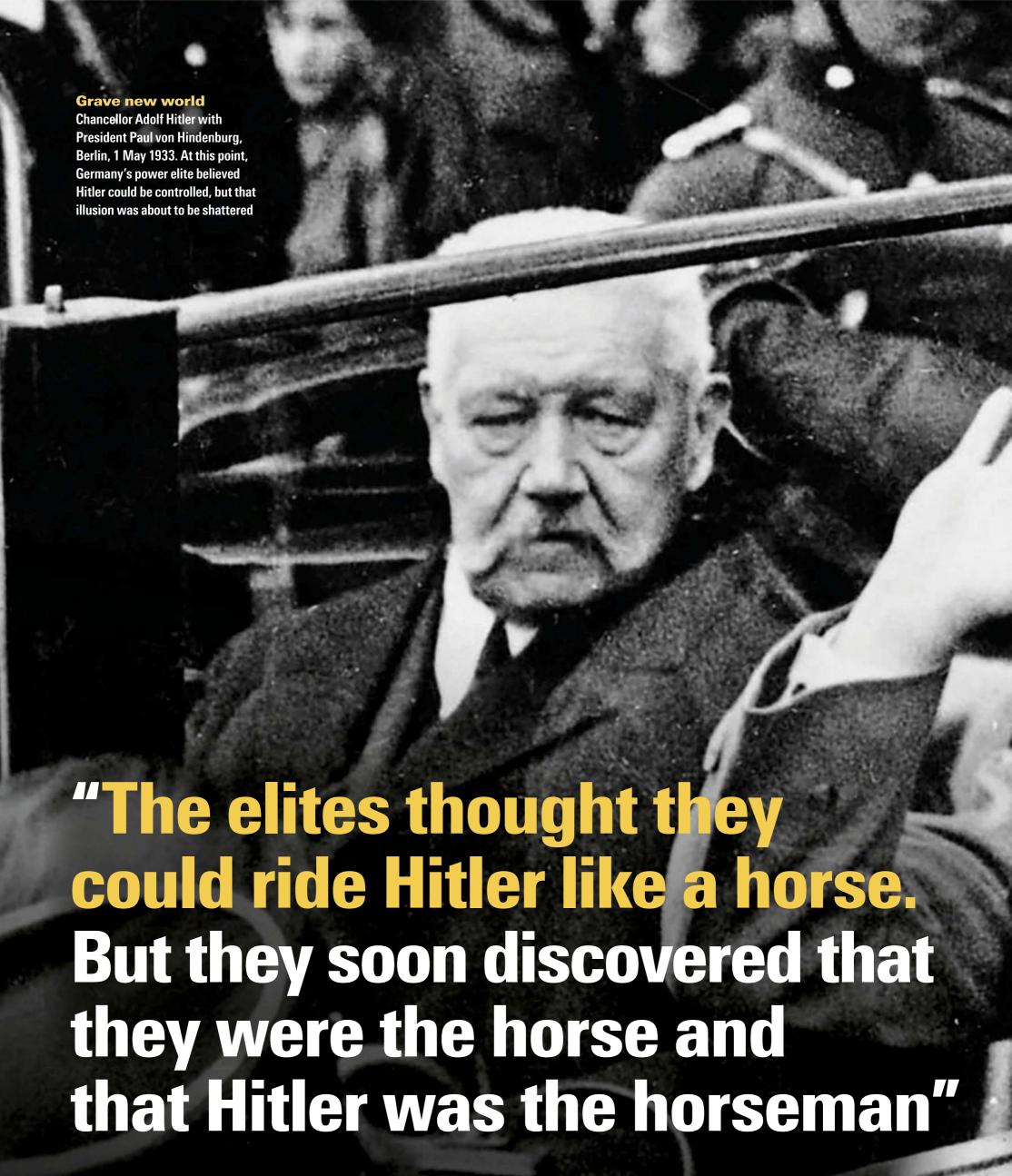
Sigurd 'Jerusalemfarer' was a Christian king of Norway who led a band of Vikings on an armed pilgrimage from Scandinavia to Jerusalem between 1107 and 1111. On their journey Sigurd's men plundered Muslim strongholds in Lisbon, Ibiza, Formentera and Menorca and banqueted with Roger II of Sicily. Once in the east, Sigurd was feted by king Baldwin I of Jerusalem, who took him to bathe in the river Jordan and worship at Christ's tomb. Sigurd was given a fragment of the True Cross to take back to Norway, and he also shared in the vast amount of booty taken when his men helped wrest the city of Sidon from Muslim rule.

### **GOLDEN CAMPAIGNER**

Although John of Gaunt was born long after the kingdom of Jerusalem was destroyed in 1291, the uncle of Richard II of England still considered himself a crusader. He managed to have his campaign to claim the crown of Castile in 1386-87 classified as a crusade. Although he never secured that prize, he signed a peace accord to end his campaign that awarded him so much gold it took 47 mules to transport it all back to England. This wealth helped fund the crusade adventures of his son Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV), who joined the Teutonic knights fighting pagans in the Baltic.

### **RANSACKER-IN-CHIEF**

Although he was in his 90s and completely blind, **Enrico Dandolo** (below) was a formidable ruler of the republic of Venice during the Fourth Crusade of 1202–04. When French crusaders could not pay the bill for Venetian shipping, Dandolo insisted on diverting to the Christian cities of Zara and Constantinople. Both were ransacked. **Dandolo ensured that** Venice made its money back and shared in the spoils when the Byzantine empire was divided up after Constantinople fell.



**Stephan Malinowski** tells Rob Attar how a cocktail of naked opportunism and misplaced arrogance among Germany's most powerful men facilitated the rise of the Third Reich



### The rise of the Nazis

t was late in the evening of 30 June 1934 when Kurt von Schleicher was disturbed from a telephone call by the arrival of a group of men at his house. According to one account, the men asked for von Schleicher to confirm his identity, and once he had done so -"Jawohl, ich bin General von Schleicher" - gunshots rang out. The man who had been one of Germany's most influential army generals, and the last chancellor before Hitler, was dead - killed during the ruthless purge known as the Night of the Long Knives. Killed because it was feared he was conspiring against the Nazi regime that he himself had helped bring to power.

When the story of the Third Reich is told, several explanations are put forward for how a party that gained only 2.6 per cent of votes in the German elections of 1928 was able to establish a radical dictatorship just five years later: the Wall Street Crash, the legacy of the First World War and Hitler's charisma, to name a few. But one aspect that often receives less attention is the influence of Germany's elite on the events of the late 1920s and early 1930s. According to University of Edinburgh historian Stephan Malinowski, contributor to a new BBC Two series, *The Rise of the Nazis*, a small group of powerful actors played a critical role in the creation of the Third Reich.

### **Boots on the streets**

Of course, there's no denying the importance of the economic collapse in helping to bring down the Weimar Republic. As Malinowski says, the world economic crisis "struck no other country as much as it did Germany, in terms of the economy falling apart:

an unemployment rate around 30 per cent, people losing their livelihoods, and their life dreams falling apart". And while there were many parties on the right and left of German politics seeking to exploit the economic catastrophe, it was the Nazi party that seemed to offer the boldest new direction. "Their voices; the sound of their boots marching on the streets; the oceans of flags and symbols and standards that they carried when they were marching through German cities and villages – this was all very different from what you would get from the conservatives and the more traditional rightwing

parties. All of these parties and



Franz von Papen, below left, rides with









# "The Nazis were a sharp break from business as usual. People could see this – they could smell it"

their leaders suddenly looked like fossils from a bygone age," Malinowski explains. "The Nazis were a sharp break from business as usual. And people could see this, they could smell it, everybody was speaking about it."

By the early 1930s, the Nazi movement was already marked by violence as political disputes were being fought out in the streets. Yet despite this, and the stark differences in style to the existing conservative parties, there was a surprising amount of common ground between the two. "There's a grey zone between Nazi and non-Nazi, and if you look at the conservative elites, you will find that around 90 per cent of them share close to all the negative aims of the Nazis," says Malinowski. "What the Nazis shared most with the power elites – be they military, industry, landowners, judges, university professors – is a language of fear, of hatred, of disdain for democracy, for the republic, communists, Jews, trade unions, modern art. It was a broad set of things that they did not want and I think it is important to understand that the basis on which the Nazis and conservatives met was a basis of negativity."

### **Disdain for democracy**

The conservative elite's hatred of democracy may seem surprising on the surface, considering they fared reasonably well under the Weimar Republic that replaced the kaiser after the First World War. As Malinowski notes: "German revolution and democracy had been extremely friendly with the conservative elites in and after 1918. The nobility kept their heads, their titles, their properties, their castles, and industrialists their factories." So why then did the elite share the Nazis' disdain for German democracy? Malinowski believes part of the answer may lie in democracy's weak foundations in Germany. "The conservative elites in Britain and France had much more time to build compromises with democracies and parliaments than in Germany. There is probably

no other country in Europe that has a higher stability of power than Britain. An observer used to the highly unstable and fragile German conditions might even feel that it was basically the same people running the country since Hastings. Yet the German elite had often been challenged and smashed, exposed to political extremism, war, destruction and revolution: the First World War and the doom of the German empire in 1918 being the most important catastrophe before the Second World War and the Holocaust.

"There was a constant feeling of threat among the elites. And they felt that they were under attack from the communists and leftwing forces. Perhaps the most important element of all is that the elite had to accept political change in 1918 at a time of doom and catastrophe and absolute despair in Germany, which is infinitely more difficult than doing it from a position of triumph."

In the German federal elections of 1932, amid ongoing economic crisis, the Nazis soared to 37 per cent of the vote – making them the biggest party in the Reichstag, though short of an overall majority. By this stage the Weimar Republic was already gravely weak, with power being exercised largely by members of the conservative elite, acting as advisors to the octogenarian war hero president, Paul von Hindenburg.

Rather than seeking to combat Nazism, the elite hoped to co-opt Hitler, with chancellor Franz von Papen offering him the role of vice-chancellor. "A metaphor these people used a lot – because most of them were noble horsemen – is that they wanted to ride the Nazi movement like a horse," says Malinowski. "They would use the momentum and the political potential of the Nazi party but still keep it at bay. The idea of 'framing' – to control Hitler, to keep him in a conservative 'frame' – was the key concept in 1933. And it was a moment of deep misery in the history of German conservatism."

Yet a coalition with the Nazis that members of the conservative elite favoured was ultimately rejected by Hitler. Lacking sufficient political support to govern, von Papen called another election in November 1932, which again saw the Nazis returned as the largest party, albeit with a smaller share of the vote. With no solution in sight, von Papen stepped down to be replaced by Kurt von Schleicher, but he also failed to create a workable administration.

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler was sworn in as German chancellor by President von Hindenburg, with other options seemingly exhausted. It's often forgotten now that the new regime was initially a conservative-Nazi coalition, with von Papen (who was vice-chancellor) and other senior figures

### HITLER'S USEFUL IDIOTS

Five members of the elite who helped create the Nazi monster



### THE CATHOLIC FIXER

**Franz von Papen** (1879–1969)

From a Catholic landowning family, von Papen held senior posts during the First World War. He served in the Reichstag from 1921 as a member of a Catholic political party, and was appointed chancellor in 1932 during the dying days of Weimar. He was later instrumental in persuading Paul von Hindenburg to make Hitler chancellor. Von Papen continued to hold senior positions during the Third Reich, spending most of the Second World War as ambassador to Turkey. He was acquitted at the Nuremberg trials.

### THE RABID ANTI-COMMUNIST

Alfred Hugenberg (1865–1951)

Hugenberg was a major player in the German media during the Weimar years, and became leader of the rightwing German National People's party in 1928. A staunch opponent of communism, socialism and the Treaty of Versailles, he cooperated with the Nazi party, forming an alliance with them and other rightwing elements in 1931. He initially served under Hitler's chancellorship and believed the Nazis could be restrained, but was soon dissuaded of that notion as his party was dissolved a few months later.

### THE AILING WAR HERO

▼ Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934)

Born into the Prussian aristocracy, von Hindenburg came to prominence during the First World War, where he was one of the key protagonists of the German military campaign. His status as a war hero saw him elected president of Germany in 1925. Following the collapse of the German economy, from 1930 the government was largely operating under his decree. Re-elected president in 1932, von Hindenburg sought to keep the Nazis

at bay but felt compelled to appoint Hitler chancellor in 1933. The aged president offered little opposition to the new regime and died in office the following year.

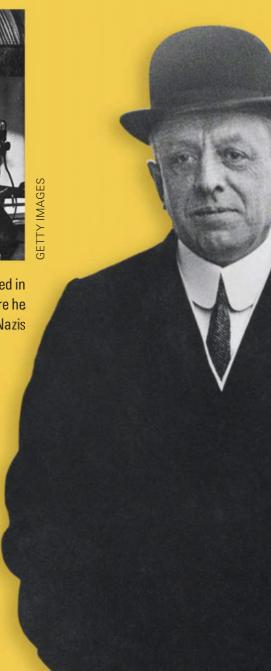


was murdered by the Nazis

### THE ENEMY OF THE REGIME

▲ Kurt von Schleicher (1882–1934)

The last chancellor of Weimar Germany, von Schleicher spent most of his career in the army, until he switched to politics when the republic began to totter. As one of the key figures in German politics after 1929, he helped bring von Papen to power and then succeeded him in December 1932. He tried to make an accommodation with Hitler but was rebuffed and, following his replacement by the Nazi leader, came to be viewed as an enemy of the Third Reich. He was murdered during the Night of the Long Knives.





### THE CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

Fritz Thyssen (1873–1951)

One of Germany's wealthiest men during the Weimar era, Thyssen took over his father's steel and iron empire in 1926. He was an early supporter of the Nazis, providing them with funds and, crucially, working to arrange contacts with other leading industrialists, which ultimately helped fuel their rise to power. Thyssen

eventually lost faith in the Nazis and fled the country during the Second World War, before being returned and spending time in the concentration camp system.

> Fritz Thyssen, pictured in 1923, bankrolled the Nazis but was later sent to Dachau

serving alongside the Nazis and still believing Hitler could be controlled. As Malinowski explains: "Most members of this power elite, in particular von Papen, underestimated Hitler and saw him as you would see a servant. When questioned about the decision [to make Hitler chancellor] by another nobleman, von Papen famously said: 'But what do you want? We have hired him.'

"Many members of the German elites thought he was going to be the useful idiot who was going to play their games. They thought he could be controlled. And I come back to this metaphor of the horseman riding the horse, except that within three or four months, they discovered that they were the horse and that Hitler was the horseman."

### Fatal misjudgment

Less than two months after Hitler became chancellor, he introduced the Enabling Act that effectively marked the end of democracy and the start of the Nazi dictatorship. Measures rapidly followed that clamped down on political parties, trade unions and, of course, Jews. The elites that had hoped to control Hitler had misjudged him totally. Says Malinowski: "This was a bunch of powerful men overestimating their political intelligence and their capacities, and very much underestimating the technical intelligence of the Nazis and the ruthlessness and brutality with which they were going to dismantle and destroy the state, and use their power against their conservative allies."

Some of those conservative allies, like von Schleicher, met their end in the Night of the Long Knives of June 1934. This was a time of realisation for the German elite, as Malinowski says: "Now they understood that this monster they had helped create had come to a Frankenstein moment where it could no longer be tamed, and was redirecting its violence against its own creators."

This was a far cry from how 'hiring' Hitler was supposed to have turned out. "The elite had sought to tame political extremism by binding it into the system, softening it, giving it more responsibility. The understanding was that when Hitler and other Nazi leaders were ministers and responsible for steering part of the economy or universities or whatever part of society, they would somehow calm down and react like normal statesmen.

"But this never happened. Hitler never reacted as a statesman in the traditional sense. The Nazis were playing an entirely new game in terms of ideology and of making the unfathomable fathomable. And the killing of 6 million Jews and millions of others in the Second World War

## no longer be tamed"

helped create could

"Now they realised

monster they had

that this Nazi

can be seen as the darkest part of this."

In August 1934 von Hindenburg died, to be succeeded by Hitler himself. The last obstacle to total Nazi domination had been removed. But while the elite had been largely sidelined from political power, that didn't mean they were all suffering under Nazi rule.

Aside, of course, from the many victims of Nazism, the early years of the Third Reich saw the majority of Germans thriving as the country's economy entered into what looked like a fantastic boom. "Many members of the elites were the great profiteers and beneficiaries of the Third Reich," says Malinowski. "The many examples of German army officers, armament industrialists or civil servants replacing sacked Jewish or socialist office holders in the state apparatus was just army, industry, universities and engineering were not necessarily directed and run by 'Nazis'. They were run by power elites. There was a power compromise between industrialists, landowners, civil servants, academics, judges and the Third Reich, and for a long time it seemed to be going very well."

So were the elite actually happy with how things turned out? "If you interviewed Germans in May 1945, you would always get the same story, which was: 'We didn't know, we didn't want this, we couldn't do anything, etc.' And some people, like Franz von Papen, were tried at Nuremburg and they would say things like: 'We did not really collaborate, or we just did our duty, or we did not like this but we did collaborate in order to prevent even worse things from happening.' This is

> "During the Third Reich itself, however, I think the views of most Germans were positive. They would say: 'Well, this is deplorable and we do not like that

one aspect of this. It is often forgotten that the

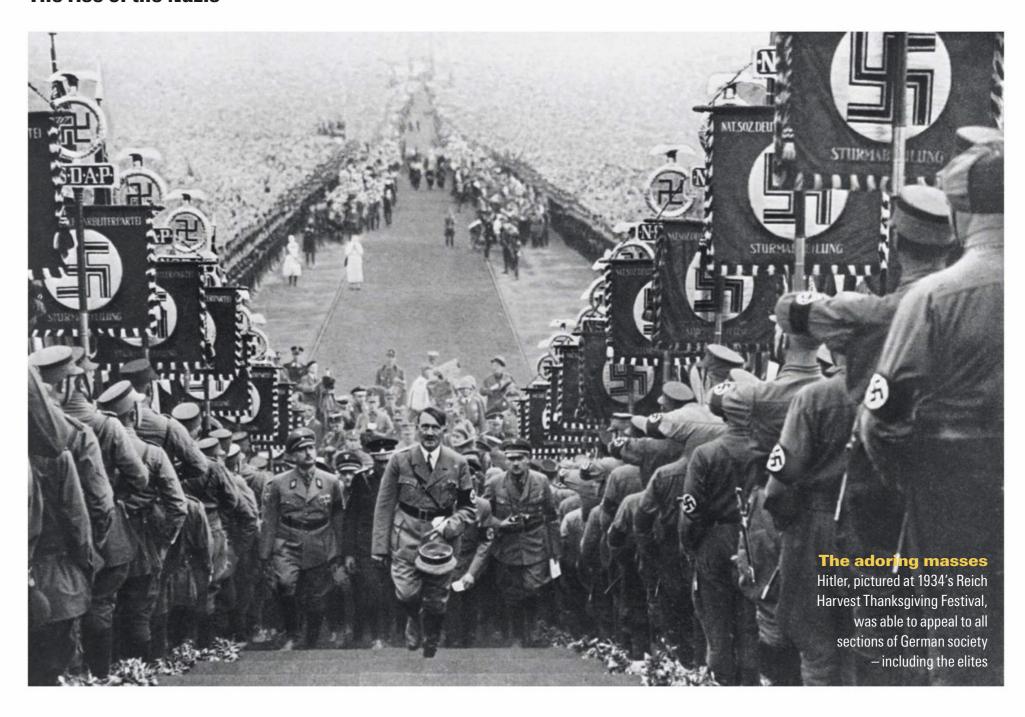
the main lie that conservative elites created after 1945, and it remains influential today.

they are beating up people, or the

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### The rise of the Nazis



### "Within months of the Nazis' rise to power, the wildest dreams of the conservatives had been exceeded"

concentration camp of Dachau, the exaggerations; some of them are drunks and they're not really cultivated; these are terrible people...' But there was a general sense of admiration for what they were achieving. In two to three months, the leftwing parties had been broken; the communists and socialists had disappeared; the trade unions and parliament had been crushed. The wildest dreams of the conservatives had been exceeded.

"And then, if you go on a few years, Hitler seemed to be achieving everything that he tried. Poland was overrun in no time, and France – where a previous generation had fought for three months to advance 500 metres – was crushed within six weeks. Summer 1940 was an unexpected moment of absolute triumph where Hitler got support from basically everywhere, including most of the German power elites. Of course, you had anti-Nazis. But if we speak about the majority of the power elites, then the story between 1933 and 1941 is one of stable support, and sometimes of enthusiastic support."

It was only when the war began to turn against the Third Reich that the real rupture between the German elite and Nazism began – a rupture that culminated in the July 1944 von Stauffenberg plot, which was led by conservative officers who were now prepared to risk their lives to bring down a regime that so many of their fellows had acquiesced with. "Heroes, no doubt, but a tiny minority within their own milieu," as Malinowski puts it.

Almost 75 years from the fall of the Third Reich, the role of the elite in facilitating Nazism remains a live topic. Recently, descendants of the former German royals have been in negotiations with state authorities to claim back their historic property, and the decision could hinge on the extent to which the Kaiser's son, Crown Prince Wilhelm, may have supported the Nazis in the 1930s. "It seems historians, lawyers and journalists will go back to questions that are still not entirely

answered: who was responsible for January 1933 and what was the role of Germany's elites in this process?" comments Malinowski.

Meanwhile, the far right is on the march again – in Europe and beyond. So what warnings might this history have for us today? Says Malinowski: "The most important lessons of 1933 and the Third Reich are about the dark sides of modernity and the general vulnerability of democracy. It's a fragile system. Any democracy losing the support of the people will fail and a democracy losing the support of its elites will fail too – especially if these elites are working against the democracy and trying to find an 'alternative'.

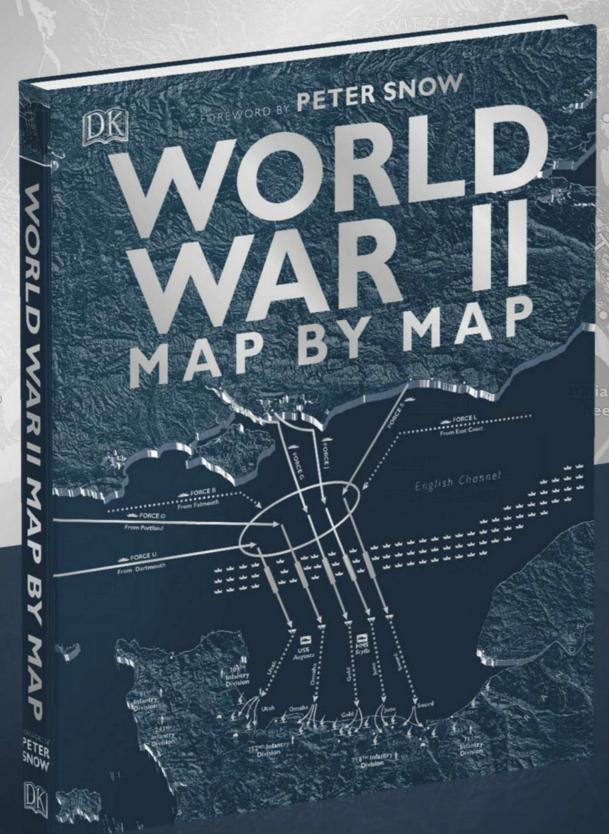
"This was the specific situation of the Weimar Republic, and it is the specific historical responsibility of the German power elites that they never came to any kind of peace treaty with the idea of a republic and democracy before 1945."

**Stephan Malinowski** is a historian at the University of Edinburgh. His book *Nobles and Nazis: The History of a Misalliance* is due to be published by OUP in 2020. Words: Rob Attar

The three-part series **The Rise**of the Nazis – to which Stephan Malinowski
was a consultant and contributor – is due to
air on BBC Two in September

### "THIS IS THE MOST COMPELLING WORK OF MILITARY GEOGRAPHY I'VE EVER SEEN"

**PETER SNOW** 



TRACE THE
EPIC HISTORY
OF WORLD WAR II
ACROSS THE GLOBE





# When great minds thought

Far from working in isolation, artists and scientists have drawn inspiration from one another for 250 years – as Tilly Blyth, curator of a new Science Museum exhibition, tells Ellie Cawthorne

Accompanies the BBC Radio 4 series The Art of Innovation



Right: Joseph Wright of Derby's c1766 oil painting A Philosopher Giving That Lecture on an Orrery, in Which a Lamp Is Put in the Place of the Sun celebrates the spread of new scientific ideas

Top right: A detail of an orrery (a clockwork model of the solar system) designed by astronomer James Ferguson in c1755. Ferguson used the mechanism to help illustrate his lectures

## alike





icture an artist daubing streaks of paint on to a canvas. Next, imagine a scientist meticulously studying samples in the lab. Initially these two figures may seem the antithesis of one another - one striving for unconstrained self-expression, the other for order and reason. But as a new exhibition at the Science Museum and an accompanying Radio 4 series demonstrate, the disciplines of art and science are far from polar opposites. Rather, the similarities between them can prove more illuminating than the differences, and cross-pollination has been an important driving force for both over the past 250 years.

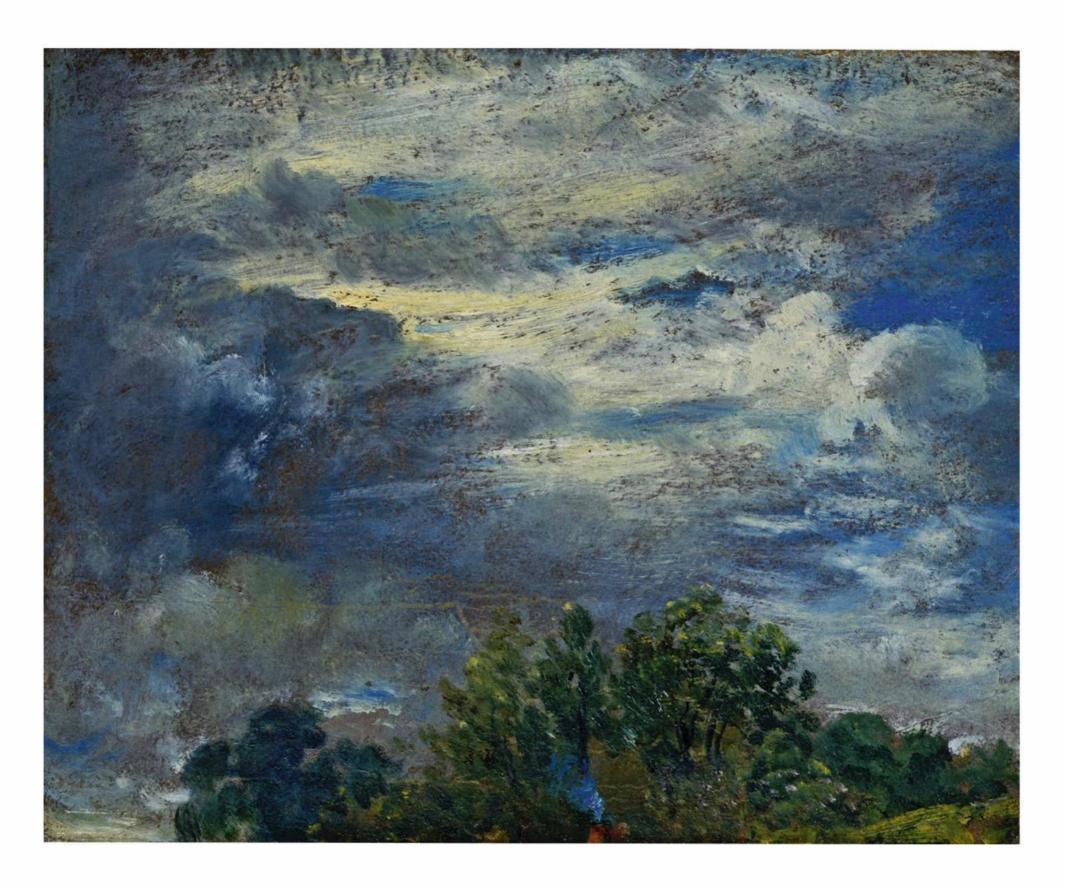
"When it comes down to it, whether you're capturing the essence of a landscape or grappling with the concept of dark matter, you're ultimately striving for the same thing – to understand the world around you," says Tilly Blyth, curator of the exhibition, and one of the presenters of the Radio 4 series.
"Success in both disciplines relies on creativity and imagination – the ability to jump further and think beyond."

### **Enlightening ideas**

As the exhibition reveals, this symbiotic relationship can be seen in a wealth of fascinating artworks and objects. One of the earliest is Joseph Wright's c1766 oil painting *A Philosopher Giving That Lecture on an Orrery, in Which a Lamp Is Put in the Place of the Sun*, showing a red-robed man of science demonstrating the movements of the solar system using a planetary model.

"This is a really phenomenal painting if you want to explore how science has inspired artists over the past 250 years," says Blyth. "It was created at the height of Europe's scientific Enlightenment, and if you look at the centre, light seems to emanate from the orrery, representing the spread of new scientific knowledge at the time." Under Wright's paintbrush, scientific endeavour becomes something to be respected and revered he depicts the quest for knowledge employing the same artistic conventions traditionally used to venerate classical or religious subjects. It's thought that he may have been inspired by a lecture from astronomer James Ferguson, who would tour his wooden orrery around Britain's coffee shops and lecture halls, eager to communicate his ideas to the 18th-century's swelling middle classes.

Artists of the 18th and early 19th centuries were not only inspired by science as a potential subject – many were also influenced by its methods. "There was no clear distinction between scientific and artistic thinking, as we have today," says Blyth. "This is something we can see if we take a closer look at John

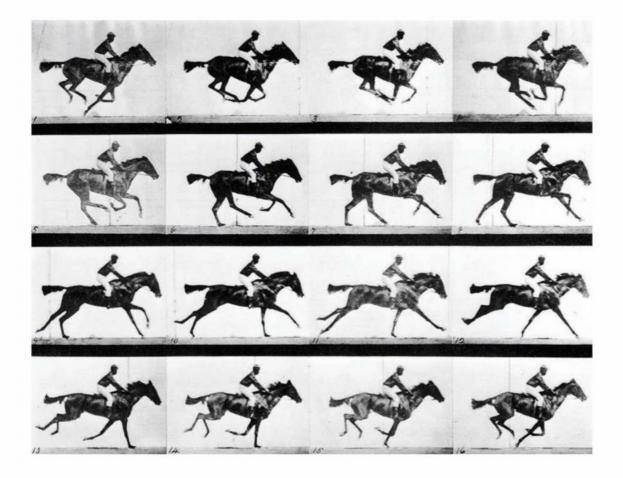


Above: John Constable's Study of Sky and Trees, dated 24 September 1821, depicts the clouds above Hampstead Heath

Top right: Eadweard Muybridge's photographs of a horse in motion. They were captured with cameras along a track of trip wires. Muybridge's experiments paved the way for motion pictures

Right bottom: Anna Atkins' cyanotype of Cystoseira granulate, published in her volume of impressions of British algae in 1843

While Constable was searching for the science behind beauty, others were uncovering beauty in their scientific research





Constable's oil painting **Study of Sky and Trees**." Capturing swirling clouds above Hampstead Heath, it's just one of many quick yet detailed skyscapes made by the artist. Constable proudly wrote to a friend that he had "done a good deal of 'skying'", and his studies of cloud formations on these outings mirrored techniques and aims of contemporary meteorologists in many ways. "He was trying to capture a log of how clouds behaved at different times of the day and year, in different wind conditions," says Blyth. Constable's aspiration to scientific rigour can be seen in a message he scribbled on the back of the canvas: "Sepr. 24th. 10 o'clock morning wind S.W. warm & fine till afternoon, when it rained & wind got more to the north."

While Constable was searching for the science behind natural beauty, the botanist Anna Atkins was uncovering beauty in her scientific research. She created inky blue cyanotypes of ferns, algae and other flora using an early cameraless photographic method known as 'sunprinting' or 'blueprinting'. Botanical specimens were placed on chemically treated paper, and then exposed to sunlight. The paper would be stained a deep cyan, leaving delicate, milky-white silhouettes. Atkins created hundreds of these intricate images, which she published in various volumes. "Her work showed that you could capture a version of nature in a level of detail never seen before, while creating something beautiful," says Blyth.

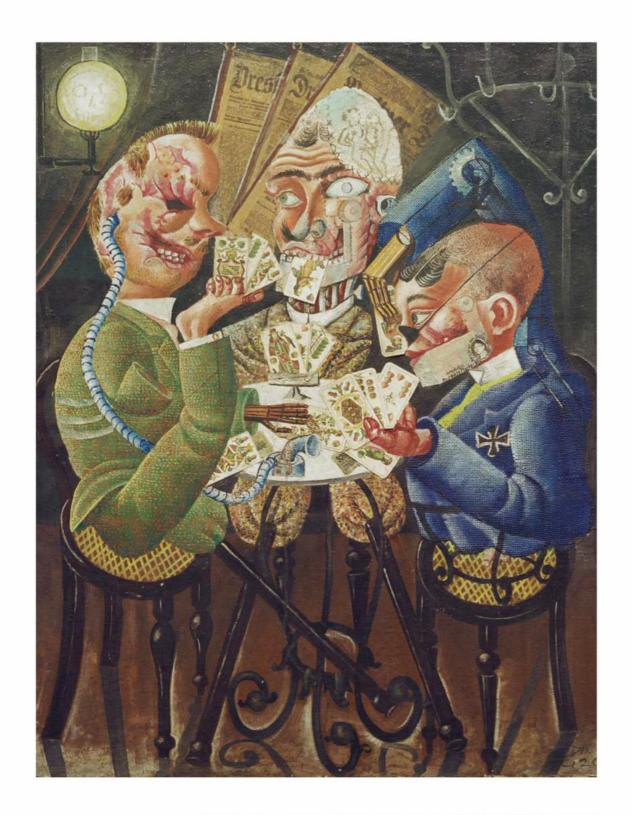
#### Life in motion

As the 19th century progressed, clearer distinctions between science and art began to emerge. But one man whose work still blurred the lines was Eadweard Muybridge, who experimented with photography as a means of capturing motion.

In the 1870s, Muybridge embarked on a vast project to document how creatures moved – from prowling lions to humans playing leapfrog. And through his use of cutting-edge technology, he changed the way artists at the time understood locomotion. "One of his images, *The Horse in Motion*, even proved a new truth," says Blyth. "Using a complex system of cameras and triggers, he showed that when a galloping horse's four hooves lifted off the ground, they didn't stretch out as artists of the time depicted, but tucked under its belly. That left artists with a question: do you have a responsibility to capture that new truth, even though you can't see it with the eye? Or do you carry on reflecting something that better captures the artistic essence of motion?"

The relationship between science and art has not always been harmonious. Take the Dada movement, which emerged out of the





Above: Three injured veterans play a game of skat in *The Cardplayers* by Otto Dix. The figures are patched together in a collage made up of paint, cloth, cards and newspaper

Right: Inspired by the structure of the mineral Afwillite, this pattern was one of several developed for the Festival of Britain by designers working with crystallographer Dr Helen Megaw. It was made in four colours and applied to a range of products



# Otto Dix's art was a backlash against the devastation unleashed by science

First World War. Works like Otto Dix's *The Cardplayers* were a backlash against the devastation unleashed by technological advancements in the trenches, such as machine guns and mustard gas. The three veterans playing cards are disfigured and burnt. "They are not really people any more: they've been turned into semi-mutilated bodies," says Blyth. "Here, Dix is making a comment on the degraded value of humanity ushered in by science in this horrific time."

While some artists rebelled against the rapid scientific progress of the 20th century, others embraced it. In 1951, the Festival of Britain was launched to showcase the very best the postwar nation had to offer in both science and design. "This was an optimistic time – people were thinking about how innovation could build a better future," says Blyth. "Nowhere is this clearer than in the *x-ray crystallography patterns* specially developed for the festival." The initial idea for the designs came from Dr Helen Megaw, who was so "impressed by the beauty" of the molecular structures she studied that she contacted designers to suggest a collaboration. Patterns based on the atomic make-up of compounds such as insulin and boric acid were rolled out across products ranging from wallpaper to dressmaking fabric and ashtrays.

"From the 18th century until today, science and art have been in continual dialogue," says Blyth. "Only by seeing them as part of the same culture can we reveal the creativity that is essential for humankind to aspire to better, to understand more, and to dream."

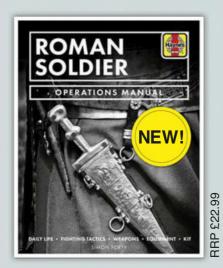
**Dr Tilly Blyth** is head of collections and principal curator at the Science Museum. The Art of Innova tion exhibition runs at the Science Museum from 25 September to 26 January 2020, and entry is free

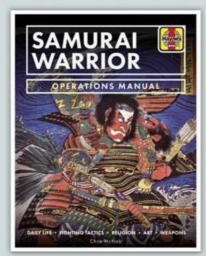
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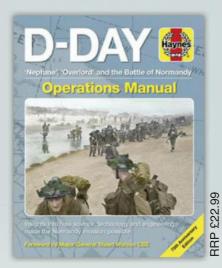
The BBC Radio 4 series
The Art of Innovation, co-presented by
Tilly Blyth, airs from 23 September

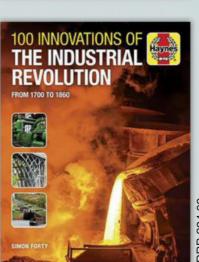












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# Elizabeth I's unlikely ally



#### The odd couple

Elizabeth I shown in the Darnley portrait of c1575 and (right) the French king Henri III. As a young man, Henri labelled Elizabeth "a public whore" but would come to regard her as "a perfect friend"

lizabeth I wasn't the only monarch fighting for her survival in 1588. In May that year, as the Spanish Armada prepared to embark upon an invasion of England, another military force was besieging Paris, forcing the hapless French king, Henri III, into flight.

Things were looking bleak for Henri as he sheltered in the nearby city of Chartres. His enemies, led by the formidable Guise family, were in the ascendant; backing for his ailing regime was draining away. Yet he wasn't without support and, when it materialised, it came from an unlikely source. It arrived in the form of a fervent Protestant named Thomas Bodley, dispatched to Chartres by none other than Queen Elizabeth I herself.

Bodley was charged with the delivery of a letter in Elizabeth's own hand. In it, the queen declared: "You cannot truly believe that I am on any other side but yours." Henri received Bodley warmly, finding, he revealed, "more kindness in his good sister the queen of England than in all the princes, his friends and allies besides".

This was a surprising turn of events indeed. Henri was a Catholic, Elizabeth a Protestant. Their nations had been at loggerheads for much of the past 300 years. They might have been expected to have been sworn enemies. But common foes, political necessity and, perhaps, genuine personal warmth, had combined to create one of the most unlikely royal friendships of the 16th century.

#### **Marital woes**

Such a friendship appeared to be a distant prospect in 1571, when Henri's mother, Catherine de Medici, offered her son's hand in marriage to Queen Elizabeth, hoping to strengthen the alliance between France and England. Henri was aghast at the idea of wedding a woman he openly denounced as "a public whore". Though she thought the young prince "very handsome", Elizabeth was equally cool on the idea of an

Anglo-French marital union. She refused the proposal on the grounds of religion and age difference – the queen was almost 20 years Henri's senior – which were her two favourite excuses for rebutting potential suitors. By the time he became king of France in 1574, Henri's attitude to the English queen had softened. He now swore to maintain "a good alliance" with her in the hope of

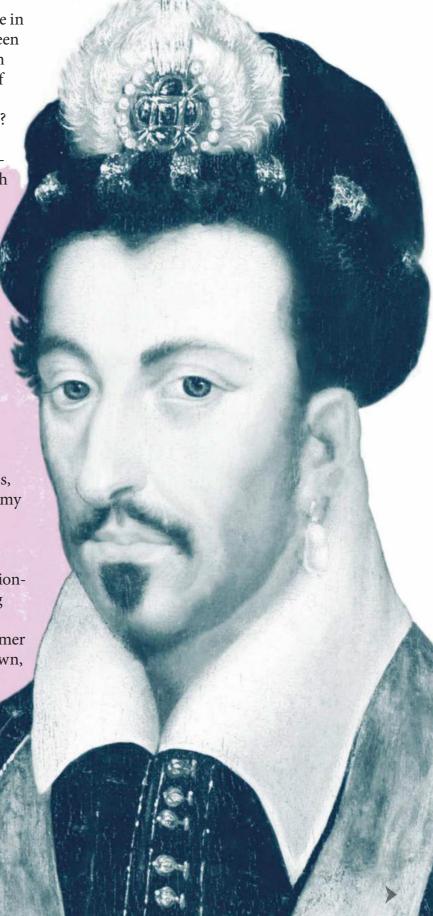
establishing a "perfect and indissoluble friendship". Why the change in attitude? The answer lay in the murky world of international relations. With an increasingly powerful Spain threatening French interests, Henri clearly needed friends even if those friends were English and Protestant.

But at first, Elizabeth proved a patchy ally. She continued to support the Huguenots (French Protestants) in their fight for their religious rights, despite swearing to Henri that she would not involve herself in the affairs of his realm. She also encouraged English privateers, such as Francis Drake, to attack both Spanish and French ships.

Henri admired Drake, but also complained about his raids on French vessels, insisting that he must "press the queen, my good sister and cousin, for justice". His demands invariably fell on deaf ears.

Further pressures were exerted on the French and English monarchs' relationship by the religious turmoil convulsing France in the late 16th century. Around 1580, Thomas Morgan, a Catholic informer and conspirator against the English crown, fled to France. In February, Elizabeth herself wrote to Henri, asking him to send the traitor back to England as a personal

favour, as the French king had "vowed to





us true affection, friendship and mutual correspondence".

But Henri's hands were tied. He had recently thrown his support behind the Catholic League, led by Henri de Guise, in their conflict with the Huguenot leader Henri de Navarre over who should be declared heir to the French throne. In the midst of this civil turmoil, Henri was under immense pressure to be seen to be defending the Catholic faith; sending a Catholic servant back to Protestant England would be viewed as treason to both his faith and his crown. And so Henri refused Elizabeth's request to return Morgan, leading an enraged English queen to write: "My God, what necromancer has blinded your eyes, that you cannot see your own danger?"

#### A problem family

Elizabeth's frosty words marked a low point in her and Henri's friendship. But ironically, the force that had driven the two monarchs apart was about to bring them together. That force was the family that had besieged Henri's Parisian stronghold: the Guise.

Elizabeth had come to the conclusion that this powerful Catholic family was the true enemy of the French crown. More to the point, with their designs on dominating Henri refused to believe that a Protestant queen could know better than him. But, by 1588, he realised that "his enemies were hers"

Europe, she was convinced that their rise would have grave implications for England too. In her mind, it was time for Henri and herself to unite against this existential threat.

Henri didn't yet view the Guises in such apocalyptic terms but he still wished to restore the good relations between himself and the English queen. And so, in May 1585, he instructed his ambassador to England, Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière, to tell Elizabeth that he was her "perfect friend" and that he only desired "a perfect friendship and relationship between our two realms". The French king even declared that "she has no better friend than me in the whole Christendom". At that time, given the enemies ranged against her across Europe, Henri may well have had a point.

Elizabeth reciprocated and, in a letter that she wrote with her own hand, assured Henri: "If the kings our predecessors, have, in all times, been accustomed to choose those amongst our own order, who by their heroic virtues and private affections towards them have obliged them to testify to them a like correspondence of good friendship and mutual intelligence: We must confess that hardly any one of them had greater cause than we have to fulfil the obligation demanded by so many proofs and testimonies as we have received of your sincere and perfect friendship and affection toward us."

Elizabeth continued to write to Henri in far more emollient terms than she had in the wake of the Thomas Morgan affair. In another missive she offered "my very genuine prayers to God, who will inspire you to open your eyes and see clearly your detractors, among whom, I will be in the last place. Your abused good sister."

It took Henri a full three years to fully

realise the peril the Guises posed to his crown. For a long time, he refused to believe that a Protestant queen could know better than him. Yet, by 1588, he had finally come to realise that "his enemies were hers". In February that year, he had a private audience with Edward Stafford, English ambassador at the French court, in which he beseeched the queen's support - and also requested that his call for assistance be kept secret.

#### The lens of history

Elizabeth and Henri had finally come to realise that they needed one another. But did they ultimately like each other? Did their friendship extend from the political to personal? This is difficult to assess through the lens of history.

We know that Henri and Elizabeth had lots in common. They both loved plays, poetry and entertainments at court. They were both well educated. They both mastered the rules of rhetoric and applied these when delivering speeches, which they insisted upon writing themselves. Perhaps, ultimately, they had more similarities than differences.

We know that Henri once declared that he had never met someone "as wise" as Elizabeth – and he appears to have meant this. The word 'wise' was crucial, especially at a time where women were rarely described in such terms. Elizabeth had proven to be a trusty ally to Henri - and he clearly appreciated it. But despite Henri's warm words, he didn't always follow Elizabeth's advice - and, in 1588, his decision to ignore the English queen's counsel cost him dear.

The French king had survived the Guises' attack on Paris in May that year, and now Henri sought to strike back. Elizabeth advised her French friend to try Henri de Guise as a traitor. But Henri had a more radical solution in mind, and in December that year ordered the duke's assassination. It was a fatal misstep. Following Guise's killing, Henri was depicted as a tyrant. His enemies prepared to move against him. And on 1 August 1589, a vengeful Dominican friar, Jacques Clément, attacked the king with a knife. He died the next day.

One of the most surprising of all royal alliances had been brought to an abrupt end by an assassin's blade. If only Henri had followed the advice of his "perfect friend" on the English throne, that friendship may have blossomed for a few years more.

**Estelle Paranque** is a lecturer in early modern history at New College of the Humanities. Her books include Elizabeth I of England Through Valois Eyes (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). She recently discussed Tudor England on our podcast: historyextra.com/podcast

#### Vive la difference

How England and France compared in the 16th century

#### **England**

#### France

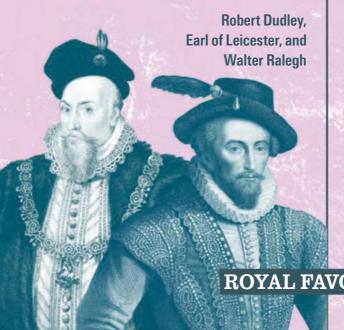
#### RELIGIOUS TURMOIL

As a Protestant queen surrounded by Catholic enemies, Elizabeth found her authority threatened by repeated plots, not to mention an attempted invasion of England by Philip II of Spain's Armada in 1588. Mary, Queen of Scots is believed to have been involved in a number of the conspiracies against Elizabeth but her guilt wasn't proven until the Babington Plot to assassinate the English queen was uncovered in 1586.

France experienced eight religious civil wars between the nation's Protestants and Catholics from 1562-98. The fourth war was triggered by one of the most notorious incidents of the 16th century - the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre - when thousands of Protestant **Huguenots were killed by Catholic** mobs. The war was brought to an end by 1598's Edict of Nantes, which granted France's Protestants certain religious liberties.

GOVERNMENT

As today, the House of Lords and the House of Commons were the chief legislative chambers of England's government. Parliamentary sessions usually took place in both houses, where Elizabeth delivered speeches and answered petitions on issues such as marriage and the succession.



She may have died unmarried, but Elizabeth had a number of favourites the best-known being Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. During the course of her reign, she also enjoyed warm relations with the lord chancellor Sir Christopher Hatton, the explorer Sir Walter Ralegh and the soldier and noble Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.

**Protestants are** butchered during the St Bartholomew's **Day Massacre** 

In France, there were two main types of parliaments: the Parlement de Paris, which was the highest court of justice; and the Estates General, mainly a legislative and consultative assembly of the different classes of French subjects, which was also in charge of taxation. Henri III delivered speeches in both institutions and answered grievances during the Estates General assembly.

**ROYAL FAVOURITES** 

For centuries rumours have swirled that Henri III was gay. But this appears to have been an unfounded assertion put about by his detractors: Henri married Louise de Lorraine-Vaudémont in 1575, and had female mistresses that he hid to avoid hurting his wife's feelings.

Henri had a number of favourites among them Anne, Duke of Joyeuse, and Jean Louis de la Valette, Duke of Epernon – who have disparagingly been called 'Les Mignons'. There is no evidence, however, that he had sexual relationships with them.

# Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

## Was there a period in British history when the average person consumed more calories than today?

The idea of the calorie as a unit for measuring nutrition was introduced in the late 19th century. In general, we don't have a lot of information about exactly how much the average person ate, but there may well have been a time when people in the past consumed more than we do today.

At Kew Palace in the late 18th century, George III and his household were served daily dinners of 18 or more dishes, divided into two or three courses. The middle classes in the 19th century liked the idea of a similarly lavish lifestyle, and Mrs Beeton provided menus for huge dinner parties, though we don't know how often readers actually attempted to produce such elaborate meals. Of course the working classes ate more simply, and more frugally. However, there is still reason to believe that in the mid-19th century they were ingesting large numbers of calories,

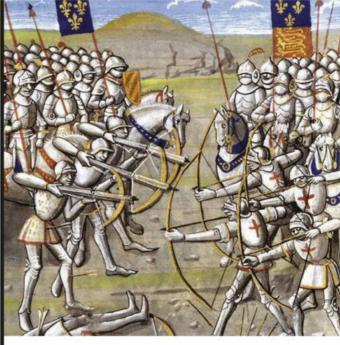
if we consider the amount of physical labour an urban worker was expected to undertake in a day, and the energy that required. Historians Paul Clayton and Judith Rowbotham have estimated that "mid-Victorian working-class men and women must have consumed between 50 and 100 per cent more calories than we do today to maintain their ability to work and survive". This does not, though, mean that they were healthier or better nourished than we are today.

In terms of health and diet, the situation in England seems to have deteriorated from the mid to the late 19th century, as processed and sugary foods began to take up a greater part of people's diets.

**Rachel Rich**, historian specialising in the cultural history of food and eating habits at Leeds Beckett University



ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH



An illustration of the battle of Crécy from a copy of Froissart's *Chronicles*. His account of the clash makes no mention of naked buttocks

#### Is it true that several French soldiers bared their bottoms at the enemy during the battle of Crécy?

on 'mooning' reports the baring of medieval French buttocks, if not at the battle of Crécy on 26 August 1346, then at the English siege of Caen a month earlier. But unfortunately, no earlier source for this act of defiance is cited than an American book of military anecdotes published in 2008.

The most detailed contemporary report of both Caen and Crécy, by the chronicler Jean Froissart, mentions no such notable incident. On the contrary, at Caen, according to Froissart, it was a panic among the French that allowed Edward III's army to seize the town and undertake one of the most notorious massacres ever perpetrated by an English army.

As for the 'mooning', there may have been confusion between Caen, Crécy and Agincourt. According to Michael Drayton's *Battaile of Agincourt* (1627), itself a largely fictitious account, the English archers in 1415 unleashed such a volley of arrows that many French behinds bristled like targets: "their broad buttocks men like butts might see".

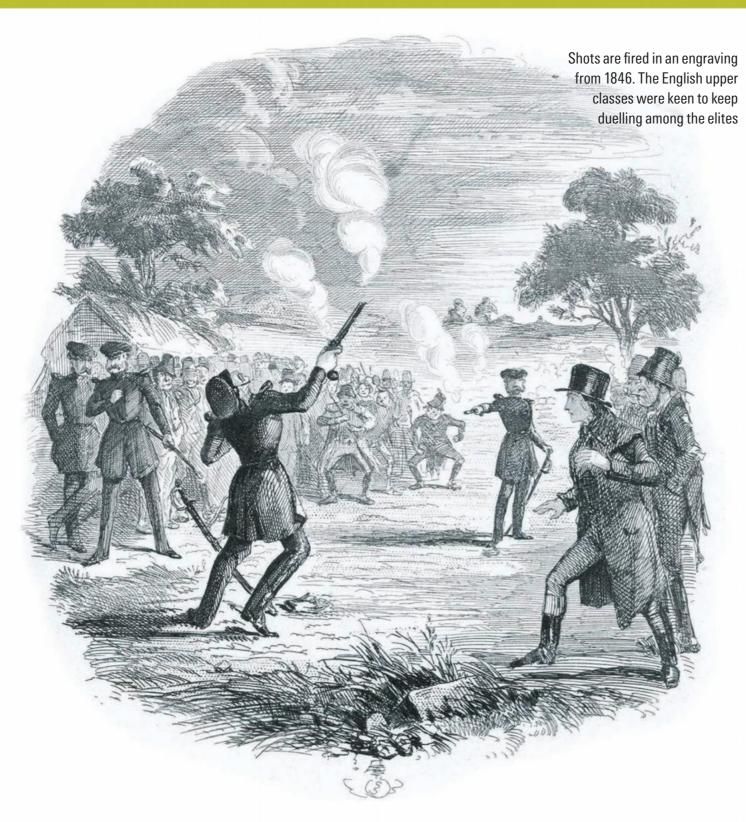
**Nicholas Vincent**, professor of medieval history at the University of East Anglia

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#### Was duelling only for the upper classes?

The English upper classes desperately wanted duelling to remain elite. By the 19th century, however, a growing group of professionals thought they had as much right as anyone else to defend their reputations at pistol-point. These were men who valued their good name because it was etched on an office door, not on a family crest. Did this mean anyone with a business card could issue a challenge? Aristocratic Englishmen did not wish to find out. For them, a duel involving two linendrapers in 1838 was the last straw. Duelling had become a farce.

Elsewhere, duellists' progress toward equality took different detours. In post-Revolutionary France, republican newspaper editors frequently crossed blades with blue-blooded monarchists. Across the continent, where the sword never fell out of favour, duelling ultimately became a sport that

naturally valued great skill over high birth. And, in the fledgling United States, where the standards for duellists became looser as one travelled west, a lawman's skill with a colt revolver might be his only professional prerequisite.

No such liberties or looseness were permitted on British soil. By 1844, hundreds of noble names – including the Duke of Wellington's – had appeared on an anti-duelling declaration. No more lawyers, no more doctors, and definitely no more linendrapers would have a chance to improve their standing by fighting a duel. Of course, the English middle classes promptly claimed all the credit for having eradicated the aristocratic vice of duelling.

So, who won in the end? Perhaps it was a draw.

......

**Margery Masterson**, research associate in British history at the University of Bristol

#### DID YOU KNOW...?

#### **Avian invasion**

In 1932, the Campion district of Western Australia was invaded by 20,000 emus who ran amok, eating crops and destroying fences. The locals appealed to the government for help and a small squad of soldiers was sent to wipe out the avian army with machine guns. What became known as the Great Emu War began. Five weeks later, frustrated by the emus scattering in all directions whenever they came under fire, the authorities admitted defeat and the troops were withdrawn.



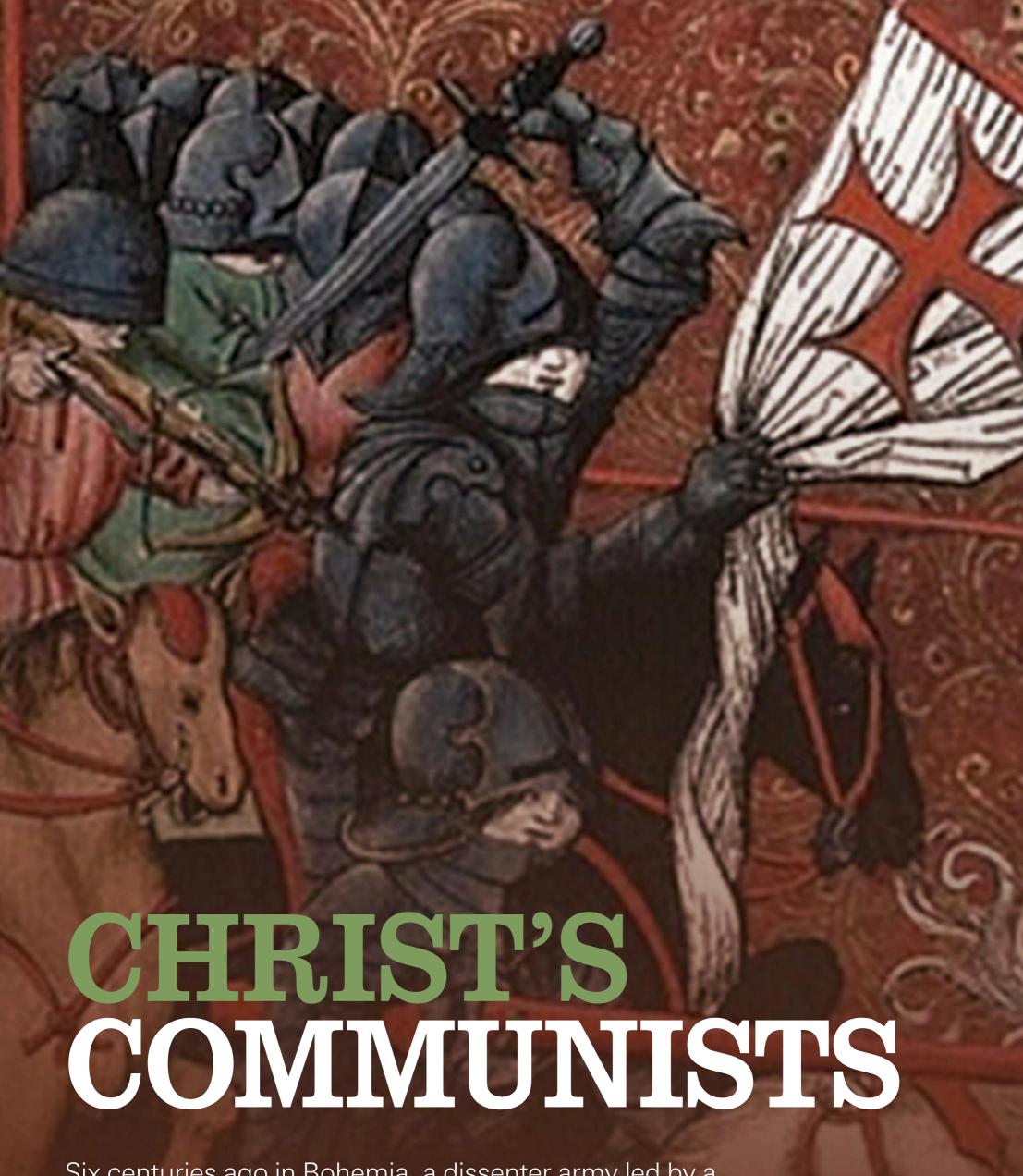
#### **Censored sewing**

In 1885, 35 women from the Leek Embroidery Society produced a full-size replica of the Bayeux Tapestry. Now on display in Reading Museum, it's a faithful reproduction in all respects but one: while the original embroidery features some naked men with nothing left to the imagination, the copy covers their modesty with pants. This wasn't prudery on the part of the stitchers; the photos they'd been given to work from had already been 'censored' by the male staff at the South Kensington Museum.

#### **Great escape**

When the Earl of Nithsdale was imprisoned in the Tower and condemned to death for his part in the 1715 Jacobite rising, his wife, Winifred, rushed to London in a bid to obtain him a pardon. King George I, however, refused to take her desperate petition for mercy. Undeterred, she smuggled some women's clothes into his cell during a visit and Nithsdale escaped from the Tower disguised as her maid.

**Julian Humphrys,** writer and journalist specialising in history



Six centuries ago in Bohemia, a dissenter army led by a one-eyed warrior waged war on the Holy Roman Empire.

Tom Holland tells the story of the Taborites, whose creed was to reject money, property... and the Antichrist



here had never been anywhere quite like it. The castle, perched on a spit of rock above the Lužnice river, had been abandoned decades before, and the blackened ruins of the settlement that had once surrounded it were choked by weeds. The rubble had to be cleared, and a new town built from scratch. There was an urgent need of fortifications. The nights were bitterly cold. Yet still the refugees came. All through March 1420, they made the trek, drawn from every class of society, from every corner of Bohemia (a kingdom that's now part of the Czech Republic). By the end of the month, camped out amid tents and half-built perimeter walls, there were women with their children, in flight from burning villages; tavern-keepers from Prague and peasants armed with flails; knights, clerics, labourers and vagrants. All shared in the common danger – and all shared a common status. Every man was called brother, and every woman sister. There were no hierarchies, no wages, no taxes. New

arrivals were obliged to hand over their possessions, which were shared out according to need. Private property was illegal. All debts were forgiven. The poor, it seemed, had inherited the earth.

The town, the first ever to be founded on quasi-communist principles, was called Tabor by its inhabitants. The name broadcast a defiant message to its enemies. In the Bible, it was recorded that Jesus had climbed a mountain to pray. "And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning." The site of this miracle had long been identified by scholars with a mountain in Galilee: Tabor. The radiance of the divine had suffused its summit, and heaven had been joined with earth. Now it was happening again. As lords laboured alongside peasants, toiling to provide Tabor with an impregnable screen of fortifications, they were not just constructing a stronghold, but aiming to set the entire world on fresh foundations.

For centuries, the immense edifice of the Catholic church, too, had stood as a monument to this ambition. It had been raised in defiance of earthly monarchs, and fashioned to serve the needs of all the Christian people. But now

Tabor had no hierarchies, no wages, no taxes. Private property was illegal. All debts were forgiven. The poor, it seemed, had inherited the earth

the lava of its radicalism had begun to calcify; the papal order had become the status quo.

Nothing, perhaps, was more debilitating to the claims of the Roman church to be the bride of Christ than one enduring abomination: a papal schism. Back in 1378, two rival popes had been elected. The schism proved impossible to heal. In 1409, a council of bishops and university masters, meeting in Pisa, declared both rival popes deposed, and crowned a new candidate - but this, far from delivering Christendom a single pope, had merely left it stuck with three. Small wonder, confronted by such a scandal, that a few bold souls, pushing at the very limits of what it was acceptable to think, began to contemplate a nightmarish possibility: that the papacy, far from holding the keys to the gates of heaven, might in truth be an agent of hell.

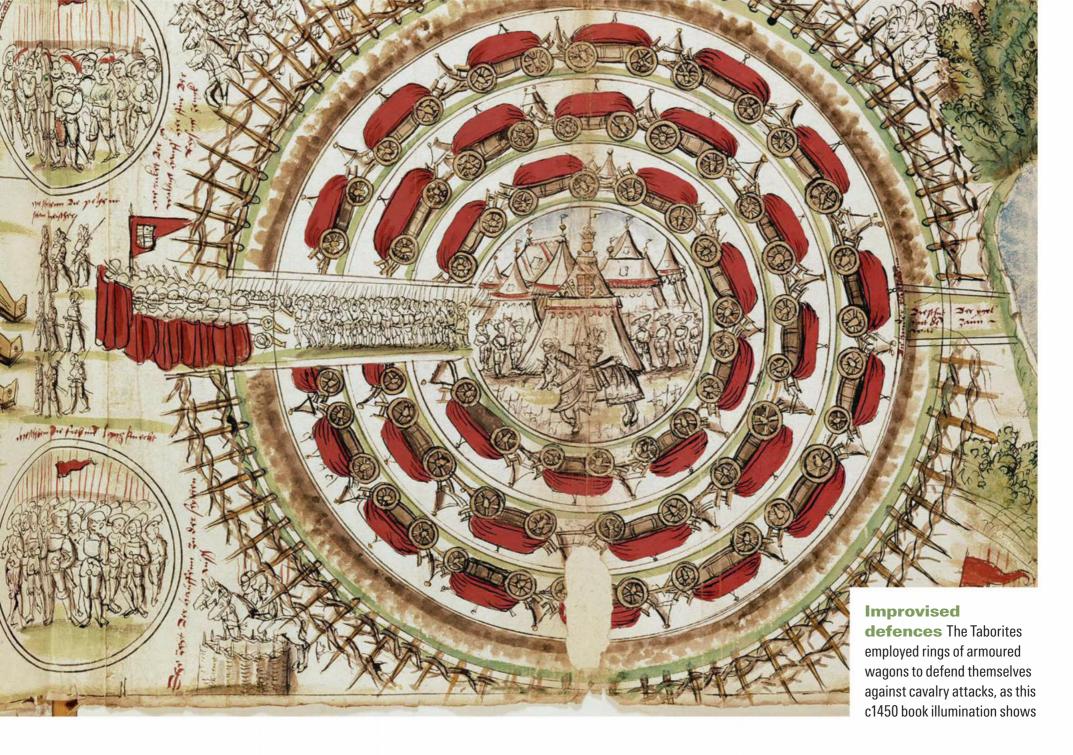
#### Seduced by earthly glory

It was in Prague that these sparks of subversion had ignited the most explosive reaction. The city had long been a tinder box. The Bohemian nobility chafed at being subject to Holy Roman Emperors who hailed from Germany. Czech-speaking scholars at the university, similarly disadvantaged, nurtured their own mood of resentment.

Meanwhile, out in the slums, the resentment was of the rich. The most popular preachers were those who condemned the wealth of monasteries adorned with gold and sumptuous fittings, and demanded a return to the stern simplicity of the early days of the church. The Christian people, they warned, had taken a desperately wrong turn. The papacy, seduced by the temptations of earthly glory, had forgotten that the gospels spoke most loudly to the poor, to the humble, to the suffering. Only the Antichrist could have wrought such a fateful, such a hellish abomination. So it was, in the streets of Prague, that it had become a common thing to paint the pope wearing the papal crown, but with



**Betrayed** The Prague preacher Jan Hus is burned at the stake. His execution, which occurred even though his safety had been guaranteed, was intended to quell rebellion. Instead, it inspired others to take up arms



the feet of a monstrous bird of prey.

One man more than any other served as a lightning rod for the gathering storm. In 1414, when church leaders from across Christendom met in the imperial city of Constance, on the edge of the Swiss Alps, their agenda was peculiarly demanding. As well as the running sore of the papal schism, a second challenge confronted them: the defiant heresy of Prague's most celebrated preacher. Jan Hus, a scholar of immense charisma, intellectual brilliance and personal integrity, had emerged from the rarefied confines of the city's university to become the toast of Bohemia. Denouncing both Prague's church hierarchy and the German-speaking elites who had long been profiting from imperial favour, he helped to bring an already febrile mood to boiling point. The more rapturously his teachings were greeted, the more radical they became. Hus openly scorned the claim of the papacy to a primacy sanctioned by God. It was not only in papal circles that this prompted panic.

Particularly alarmed was Sigismund, a ginger-haired veteran of war against the Turks, and a prince of the royal blood, who in 1411 had been proclaimed Holy Roman Emperor-elect. Desperate to secure a compromise that all the various factions in Bohemia could accept, he invited Hus to travel to Constance, and to negotiate directly with the delegates to the council. Hus accepted the invitation. Leaving the castle in Bohemia where he had been sheltering from papal agents, Hus travelled under a safe conduct personally guaranteed by Sigismund. On 3 November 1414, he arrived in Constance. Three weeks later, he was arrested. Put on trial, Hus refused to recant. Sentenced to death as a heretic, he was burned at the stake in July 1415.

#### **Festering resentments**

"The time of greatest suffering, prophesied by Christ in his scriptures, the apostles in their letters, the prophets, and Saint John in the Apocalypse, is now at hand; it has begun; it stands at the gates!" wrote one polemicist

in 1420. Five years on from the burning of Hus, the Taborites gathered in their rocky stronghold confident that they would soon be seeing him again – and all the risen saints of God. Far from

#### Perfidious ruler?

Sigismund I, Holy Roman
Emperor-elect. It was assumed
that his treachery led to
Jan Hus's death

extinguishing the flames of subversion, the Council of Constance had served only to stoke them further. Not even the council's success in once again installing a single pope on the throne of Saint Peter had been able to redeem its reputation in Bohemia. In the wake of the execution of Hus, denunciations of the papacy as the Antichrist began to be made openly across Prague. Of Sigismund as well – for it was presumed that it was as a result of his treachery that Hus had been delivered up to the flames. Then, in 1419, an attempted crackdown by conservatives precipitated revolt. Hussites, named for the executed preacher, stormed the city hall, flung their opponents out of its windows, and seized control of churches across Prague.

It was out on the mountains, though, that the true revolution was coming to a head. There, when the faithful assembled in flight from their homes, it was in the conviction that Prague was Babylon, an evil and debauched city. Nowhere was this more evident than behind the rising walls of Tabor. Labouring in the mud, mixing mortar, hauling stone, those who had flocked there knew what was approaching. Christ was destined to return within months. All sinners would perish. The reign of the saints would begin. "Only God's elect were to remain on earth – those who had fled to the mountains."

The Taborites were hardly the first

#### **Christ's communists**

Christians to believe themselves living in the shadow of Apocalypse. The novelty lay rather in the scale of the crisis that had prompted their imaginings: one in which all the traditional underpinnings of society, all the established frameworks of authority, appeared fatally compromised. Confronted by a church that was the swollen body of the Antichrist, and an emperor guilty of blatant treachery, the Taborites pledged themselves to revolution. It was not enough, though, merely to return to the ideals of the early church: to live equally as brothers and sisters, to share everything in common. The filth of the world beyond Tabor, where those who had chosen not to flee to the mountains still wallowed in corruption, had to be swept away. It was not only emperors and popes whom the Taborites aspired to eliminate. All those who had scorned to redeem themselves from the fallen world were sinners. "Each of the faithful ought to wash his hands in the blood of Christ's foes," wrote one chronicler.

Many Hussites, confronted by this brutal refusal to turn the other cheek, were appalled. "Heresy and tyrannical cruelty," one of them termed it. The summer of 1420, though, was no time for the moderates to stand on their principles. The peril was too great. In May, at the head of a great army of crusaders summoned from across Christendom, Sigismund advanced on Hussite Prague. The Taborites, leaving behind only a skeleton garrison, marched to the city's relief. At their head rode a general of genius: Jan Žižka, one-eyed and 44 years old. That July, looking to break the besiegers' attempt to starve Prague into submission, he launched a surprise attack on the crusaders so devastating that Sigismund had no choice but to withdraw.

#### **Blinded by success**

Further victories quickly followed. Žižka proved irresistible. Not even the loss in 1421 of his one good eye to an arrow served to handicap him. Innovative and brutal in equal measure, Žižka was the living embodiment of the Taborite revolution. Noblemen on their armoured chargers he met with rings of armoured wagons, hauled from muddy farmyards and manned by peasants equipped with early hand-held firearms; monks he would order burned at the stake, or else

personally club to death. Never once did the general meet with defeat. By 1424, when he finally fell sick and died, all of Bohemia was under Taborite rule.

On his sickbed, so his enemies reported, Žižka had ordered the Taborites to flay his corpse, feed his flesh to carrion beasts, and fashion a drum out of his skin.



**The clutches of evil** An apocalyptic beast embraces Catholic prelates in an illustration from c1490–1510. The Taborites believed that the established church had been consumed by the Antichrist

#### Žižka ordered the Taborites to flay his corpse, feed his flesh to carrion beasts, and fashion a drum out of his skin

"Then, with this drum in the lead, they should go to war. Their enemies would turn to flight as soon as they heard its voice." The anecdote was tribute both to Žižka's fearsome reputation, and to the continuing success of his followers on the battlefield after his death.

Yet in truth, the Taborite drum had begun to sound a muffled beat even while Žižka was alive. In the summer of 1420, in the wake of the great victory over Sigismund, it was still possible for the Taborites to believe that Christ's return was imminent. Readying Prague for this arrival, they systematically targeted symbols of privilege. Monasteries were levelled; the bushy moustaches much favoured by the Bohemian elite forcibly shaved off; the bones of a recently deceased king dug up, and crowned with straw.

As the months and then the years passed, though, and still Christ failed to appear, so the radicalism of the Taborites began to fade. They elected a bishop; negotiated to secure a king; charged the most extreme in their ranks with heresy, and expelled them from Tabor. Well before the abrupt and crushing

defeat of the Taborites by a force of more moderate Hussites in 1434, the fire in their movement had been guttering. Christ had not returned. The world had not been purged of kings. Tabor had not, after all, been crowned the New Jerusalem. In 1436, when Hussite ambassadors, achieving a startling first for a supposedly heretical sect, negotiated a concordat directly with the papacy, the Taborites had little choice but to accept it.

Yet even though the fall of Tabor itself in 1452 signalled the final extinction of their movement, the yearnings that had inspired them lived on. The Taborites were certainly not the last to call for the poor to inherit the earth. Three and a half centuries after the Taborites had mockingly crowned the skull of a king with straw, French revolutionaries consigned the corpse of another king, Louis XVI, to a pauper's grave in Paris. "Woe to you who are rich." Christ's words might almost have been the manifesto as well of those who, in 1917, overthrew the Russian government and laboured to establish a paradise on earth.

Marxists, just as the Taborites had done, believed that history was proceeding on an implacable course, and that the hour of salvation was at hand. Contemptuous of religion though Jacobins and Bolsheviks might have been, they were ultimately no less Christian in their inspiration for all that. The spirit of Tabor, long extinguished though it might appear to have been, was in truth very far from dead.

rgan

Tom Holland's latest book, Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind, is published by Little, Brown in early September. He will be discussing the influence of Christianity at our History Weekends in Chester and Winchester (historyextra.com/events)

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# Hypocrite,

reactionary,

usurper,

sex maniac?

Catherine the Great's reputation has come under sustained attack over the past two centuries. But do the charges against her stand up to scrutiny?

Janet Hartley has her doubts

#### I stand accused

A portrait of Catherine the Great. The Russian empress has been excoriated for everything from faking her concern for the plight of Russia's serfs to ruthlessly hunting down younger men



blush for mankind." That was Nikolay Karamzin's withering verdict on the reign of Catherine the Great. Karamzin – who, in the early 19th century, penned a wide-ranging history of Russia – wasn't the only historian to disapprove of the empress's behaviour. In fact, ever since Catherine died in 1796, it seems that critics have been lining up to attack her reputation.

So how did Catherine make Karamzin blush? Of all the many criticisms levelled against her, four stand out: that she usurped the Russian throne from her husband; that she was irredeemably promiscuous, preying on a succession of ever younger men; that she masqueraded as an enlightened monarch while doing little to ameliorate the suffering of the poor; and that she pursued a rapacious foreign policy.

It's a damaging charge-list indeed. But does it stand up to scrutiny? I believe not. Catherine undoubtedly had her flaws – as a new Sky Atlantic drama about the empress, due to air later this year, will lay bare. But examine Catherine's record within the context of her time and, I would argue, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that she deserves to be judged more sympathetically.

Take the first of her major 'crimes': her seizure of power. It's true that Catherine had no claim to the Russian throne – she was the product of a German princely family that had fallen on hard times. It's also true that her rise – from anonymous aristocrat to empress of Russia by the age of 33 – was utterly remarkable. Yet her elevation was as much the product of her mother's opportunism, the diplomatic intrigues of the royal court, and her ability to impress the Russian ruler, Empress Elizabeth, as her own naked ambition.

The key to Catherine's rise was her

# Catherine wasn't the only member of Russia's elite to benefit from her husband's downfall

betrothal to Empress Elizabeth's heir, Peter, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. They married in 1745 and Peter became tsar in 1761. The couple's marriage was tempestuous and, just over six months after Peter had become tsar (as Peter III), he was overthrown by Catherine with the support of army officers from the elite guards' regiments, including Catherine's own lover, Grigory Orlov. A few days after the coup, Peter was killed by Orlov's brother, supposedly in a drunken brawl.

Catherine certainly benefited from her husband's downfall, but she was far from the only one. A common saying about Russian tsardom is that it was "autocracy tempered by assassination"; that is, the ruler had almost unlimited powers but was always vulnerable to being dethroned if he or she alienated the elites. Peter III had done just that, and in particular had offended the patriotic feelings of the army officer corps by switching sides in the Seven Years' War, signing a peace deal with Frederick the Great of Prussia, and abandoning Russian conquests in East Prussia. The emperor appeared capricious and unstable, which led to plots against him by top officials. Catherine herself was at risk, as her husband threatened to divorce her, marry his mistress and disinherit her son.

It is impossible to know how Peter's reign would have evolved but those officers and officials who engineered the coup could, in later years, look back at Catherine's record and believe, with some justification, that they had acted in the country's best interests as well as their own.

#### The loves of her life

Catherine once wrote: "Had it been my fate to have a husband whom I could love, I would never have changed towards him." She had little in common with the boorish and immature emperor, who soon made it clear that he was indifferent to her and repeatedly humiliated her in public. And so Catherine looked elsewhere, which brings us to the second of the four main charges laid against her: her promiscuity.

Catherine probably had 12 lovers in her lifetime, including several before she came to the throne. But it was her affair with the handsome Sergey Saltykov, while she was married to Peter, that arguably had the greatest ramifications. Many historians believe that Saltykov was the father of Catherine's son and the future emperor, Paul I (Peter failed to produce any children with his many mistresses, and so may well have been infertile). Paul was born in 1754, while Empress Elizabeth was still on the throne. Whatever the father's identity, it was in Elizabeth's interests as much as Catherine's to proclaim Paul the legitimate son of the heir to the throne – in fact, Elizabeth had probably connived in Catherine's affair with Saltykov in the first place.

The Saltykov affair may have produced an heir but it doesn't number among the two great relationships of Catherine's life. The first of these was with Grigory Orlov, lasting 12 years; the second was a passionate affair with the statesman and general Grigory

#### TIMELINE Catherine the Great: Russia's warrior empress

#### 21 April 1729\*

Sophia of Anhalt Zerbst, the future Catherine the Great, is born in Stettin (now Szczecin in Poland) to Princess Johanna Elizabeth of Holstein-Gottorp and Prince Christian August of Anhalt Zerbst.

\*All dates according to the Julian calendar, used in 18th-century Russia

#### **21 August 1745**

Catherine (the name she took in 1744 when she converted to Russian Orthodoxy) marries the future Peter III in St Petersburg during the reign of Elizabeth.

An 18th-century portrait of Grigory Orlov, Catherine's lover for 12 years

#### **25 December 1761**

Peter III becomes tsar of Russia.

Catherine with the help of elite army officers, including her lover Grigory Orlov. She becomes empress.

28 June 1762

Peter III is deposed by

Catherine discusses
Poland's fate with
fellow rulers in an
engraving from 1773

#### **30 July 1767**

Catherine publishes her *Instruction*, which proposes liberal, humanitarian political theories.

#### **25 July 1772** Austria, Prussia and

Russia agree to partition
Poland-Lithuania. Russia
gains territory in
Lithuania.



BRIDGEMAN/AKG IMA



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Potemkin. Letters from Catherine to Potemkin testify to the depth of her love for him: "My dearest friend, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, you are so handsome, clever, jovial and funny; when I am with you I attach no importance to the world. I have never been so happy." The two were probably married secretly in a religious ceremony.

But there was also a tragic element to Catherine's personal life. She seemed unable to sustain her relationships - and many of her lovers were unfaithful to her, including Orlov. Potemkin, too, fell out of favour with the empress at court after a couple of years, although their deep affection for each other remained. His final letter, penned on the day he died, was to "my little mother, most gracious sovereign lady". Catherine was devastated by Potemkin's death. Yet perhaps the manner in which she had assumed the throne had made her wary of any man who might wish to exercise power through her.

Whether Catherine was promiscuous is a matter of personal judgment. Towards the end of her reign there was certainly a procession of young, often shallow, but always handsome lovers. There can be little doubt that the ageing empress's proclivity for these men wrought considerable damage to her reputation, and that of the Russian court.

#### **Bad practice?**

Catherine's colourful love life was manna from heaven for Europe's sketch writers and cartoonists. But the third main criticism levelled against her – that she was a hypocrite

#### **10 July 1774**

The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (today Kaynardzha in Bulgaria) ends the first Russo-Turkish war (1768-74). Russia acquires significant territory on the northern coast of the Black Sea, including the towns of Kerch and Kinburn and the coast between the rivers Bug and Dnieper.

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

#### 8 April 1783

Catherine issues a manifesto proclaiming her intention to annex the Crimea from the Ottoman empire. The annexation is confirmed in practice by an agreement with the Turks on 28 December 1783.

#### **21 April 1785**

Charters to the nobles and towns are promulgated, clarifying the rights and privileges of nobles and townspeople.

#### **5 October 1791**

**Grigory Potemkin,** Catherine's favourite and former lover, dies on campaign in Moldavia just before the conclusion of the treaty with the Ottoman empire that ends the second Russo-Turkish War.

Catherine's great love, **Grigory Potemkin. His** death in 1791 was a bitter blow to the empress

#### 13 October 1795

The final partition of **Poland-Lithuania** is agreed between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Russia acquires 120,000 square km of Lithuania, western Ukraine and Belarus as a result of the three partitions.

#### 6 November 1796

Catherine dies in St Petersburg.



The Grand Church of the Winter Palace, which was consecrated during Catherine's reign

#### **Catherine the Great**



**Double standards** Helen Mirren plays Catherine the Great in a forthcoming Sky Atlantic drama. Has history judged the Russian empress more harshly because she was a woman?

– is surely every bit as destructive to her legacy. Such allegations centre on Catherine's claims to be an enlightened monarch, one who, so the criticism goes, failed to practise what she preached.

At the beginning of her reign, Catherine summoned an assembly, called the Legislative Commission, which comprised almost 600 elected representatives from many of the social groups that made up Russia's population. There were no serf representatives, but members included state peasants (peasants on non-noble land), townspeople, non-Russians – and, of course, nobles.

Catherine presented the assembly with the so-called *Instruction*, which famously recommended liberal, humanitarian political theories. She used the most modern writings on politics and law from French and Italian thinkers of the time to provoke debate.

In an autocracy such as Russia, these were radical proposals indeed. But, to a large extent, proposals are all they remained. The *Instruction* had little impact on the ground in Russia – it triggered no emancipation of the nation's serfs. What's more, Catherine plagiarised much of the *Instruction* from other texts, including *The Spirit of the Laws* by the French philosopher Montesquieu, and deliberately distorted his analysis so that she could describe Russia as an "absolute monarchy" rather than as a "despotism". In short, so the criticism goes, while ostensibly



**Conquering hero?** Catherine is portrayed as the goddess Minerva atop a triumphal chariot in this allegory of her victory over the Turks and Tatars in 1772. By the end of her reign, Russia dominated the Black Sea

#### Catherine couldn't abolish serfdom without the nobles' support, and that support wasn't forthcoming

portraying herself as a modern Enlightenment ruler, she was nothing of the sort.

But is this accusation fair? There was certainly a large gap between Catherine's aspirations in her *Instruction* and her achievements. This can primarily be explained, however, not by her hypocrisy but by the realities of her power base and the nature of the Russian state. The Legislative Commission exposed that there was little appetite to engage with the ideas in the *Instruction*, or to modernise Russia. The nobles made it clear that their main desire was to keep their exclusive right to own serfs – and, without their support, it was impossible for Catherine to modify, let alone abolish, serfdom.

Where Catherine could implement reforms, she did. She was an important patron of the arts; she encouraged translations of foreign books; she established the first national system of education in Russia based on the best models of the time; she abolished torture (at least in principle); and improved judicial procedures and local administration. She promulgated two important charters in 1785 for towns and nobles: the former attempted to enhance the status of towns and townspeople, by establishing new organs of self-government and modern craft guilds; the latter clarified and confirmed the rights and privileges of the nobility in an attempt to bring their status in line with that of their central and western European counterparts.

"Russia is a European state," were Catherine's opening words in the first chapter of her *Instruction*. This was a cultural, not a geographical statement, and one Catherine genuinely believed. Within the confines in which she had to operate, she tried to bring Russian culture and the Russian social elites into an 'enlightened' European framework.

#### Cynical diplomacy

Where Catherine was arguably less enlightened was in the arena of foreign relations. There is no doubt that her Russia was an aggressive nation: she fought wars against the Ottoman empire, Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, and her victories led to the acquisition of swathes of territory to the south and west.

It might, perhaps, be seen as a weak defence of Catherine to say that other rulers





of the time were just as rapacious as her. But that was the case. Frederick the Great of Prussia and Maria Theresa of Austria were every bit as ruthless as Catherine in sacrificing entire nations on the altar of their ambitions.

The main casualty of this cynical brand of diplomacy was Poland-Lithuania, which was partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria no fewer than three times in the late 18th century. Frederick and Maria Theresa initiated the first partition in 1772 in order to 'balance' what they feared would be an inevitable Russian expansion into that territory. Catherine approved the second partition, in 1793, in order to head off an apparent threat to the political and social order influenced by French revolutionary ideals. She regarded the subsequent revolt, which led to a final partition in 1795, as a dangerous insurgency that had to be crushed.

None of this was of any consolation to the Poles and Lithuanians who found their country divided and dismembered. Nor can there be any excuse for the Russian army's slaughter of 20,000 civilians in Warsaw in 1794 during the suppression of the revolt.

Poland's disappearance from the map was a source of potential instability throughout the 19th century. But the result was that Russia had a presence in the heart of Europe.

Catherine also kept her nerve in a series of often difficult negotiations with the Ottoman empire, ensuring that Russia acquired

important territory on the north coast of the Black Sea. In 1783, when the empress declared the annexation of the Crimea, the Ottomans had no choice but to acquiesce.

Russia now dominated the Black Sea, and it looked as if Catherine was setting her sights on reclaiming Constantinople for Orthodox Christianity. The empress had acquired more territory in Europe than any Russian ruler since Ivan the Terrible in the 16th century. She had made Russia a 'great power' – one that other nations ignored at their peril.

#### Judged for her sex

There are many reasons why historians have been unduly harsh on Catherine the Great over the past 200 years – a failure to appreciate the constraints in which she had to operate being just one. But I believe there is another factor in play here, and that's her sex. Had Catherine been a man, she would surely have been judged more favourably.

Male rulers frequently had mistresses. Catherine's husband, Peter III, was no exception; nor was her grandson Alexander I, who voiced his disapproval of her conduct. Would an *emperor* have been regarded as rapacious in extending Russia's borders so extensively in the same way as an *empress*? Peter I and Alexander I also threatened the balance of power but their actions were not described in the same disparaging tones.

These double standards are expressed

most poignantly in the British cartoon *An Imperial Stride!* (above). In it, Catherine is straddling Europe with rulers looking up her skirts and making lewd comments: "What! What! What! What a prodigious expansion!" comments George III. "Never saw anything like it!" declares Louis XVI. "The whole Turkish army wouldn't satisfy her," exclaims the Turkish sultan. The cartoon dates from 1791, at the peak of Russian power: Catherine has one foot in Russia while, in recognition of her victories over the Ottoman empire, her toe touches a crescent in Constantinople.

Her fellow rulers might have mocked Catherine. But, as the cartoon acknowledges, the threat that her resurgent nation posed to Europe's traditional superpowers gave them good reason to fear her too.

Janet Hartley is professor of international history at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her books include *Russia* 1762 1825: Military Power, the State and the People (Praeger, 2008)

WATCH A new four-part drama on Catherine the Great, starring Helen Mirren, is due to air on Sky Atlantic later this year

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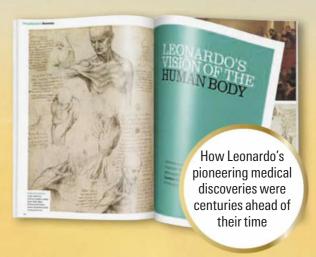
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There are many bold stories by well-known writers on display, including one of the first editions of John Maynard Keynes' *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, which he completed after attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. There's also a rare signed first edition of *In Our Time* by Ernest Hemingway, and a hand-written letter from Virginia Woolf describing Second

World War bombers flying overhead.
These works are complemented by unique photographs and documents that give the writing context, such as one of the few surviving photo-static copies of the 'Nazi Black Book', listing peace activists and politicians targeted by the Gestapo. It was gifted to the library in 1945 by the Ministry of Information, which was based at Senate House during the Second World War.

Running until 14 December 2019, the free exhibition is a wonderful opportunity to explore the writing used for peace at protests, in exile and during wartime, while providing a moment for reflection at a time when the world continues to face conflict.

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Everything on display in the *Writing in Times of Conflict* exhibition is part of the rich and extensive collection held at Senate House Library, London, including more than 2 million books, 50 unique Special Collections and more than 1,600 archives. It's one of the UK's largest academic libraries for the arts, humanities and social sciences, and all the more exciting for being set in a stunning Grade II-Listed art deco building in the heart of Bloomsbury.



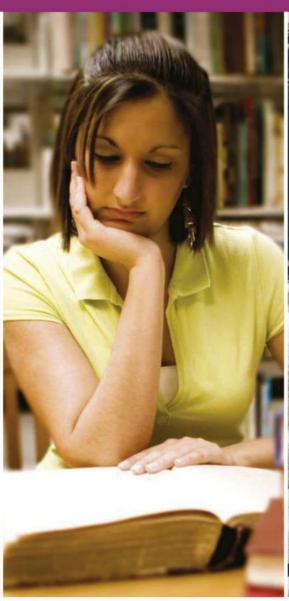


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#### **OPINION**

## Studying history in 2019



From technological developments to the impact of 'decolonisation', history departments at UK universities are undergoing radical shifts. **Meleisa Ono-George** explains how students will be affected

cross the country, universities and colleges are experiencing major changes. While the causes of these shifts are numerous and wide-ranging – not least Brexit and a growing awareness of student mental health issues – a handful of factors are particularly relevant to history departments.

These include the introduction of methods to improve teaching standards, a push to increase diversity and address inequality, and a student-led drive to 'decolonise the curriculum'. This is not an exhaustive list of talking points, but here are some of the key elements set to shape the student experience of university – and history degrees – in the future.

#### Getting value for money

In recent years, students have been increasingly repositioned as 'consumers', with

teaching accorded an equal status to research in the priorities of the institution. One driver behind this has been the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), launched in 2017, which assesses the quality of tuition at certain universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The framework, managed by the Office for Students (OfS), an independent regulator, ranks institutions using data from the National Student Survey – completed by students in their final undergraduate year – combined with stats on continuation rates and graduate employment. Universities can also submit a statement about their teaching excellence, and earn gold, silver, bronze or provisional awards as a result.

At first glance, the TEF seems a straightforward exercise, seeking to ensure universities provide high-quality teaching and a decent 'service' for students. But it has been at the centre of much controversy – not least because English universities with a TEF award can increase their annual tuition fees £250 above the £9,000 cap of those without one.

With rising costs for students, there is mounting pressure on universities to ensure their degrees offer good value for money, with graduate employability becoming a key concern for history departments in particular. According to the 2016–17 *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education* survey, only 40.9 per cent of graduates in 'history and philosophical studies' – which includes history, philosophy, theology, heritage studies and archaeology – were in full-time employment six months after leaving, a much lower figure than for many other subjects.

To remedy this, some departments have begun to offer work placements to students as part of their degrees, allowing them to gain

experience at museums and heritage organisations, for example. Students have also been encouraged to engage with an emerging discipline known as the digital humanities. The term encompasses a broad range of activities, including the digitisation of archival and primary source materials, and the creation of searchable online databases. One example is University College London's Legacies of British Slave-Ownership database, which allows researchers to find details of the compensation paid to owners after the British abolition of slavery in 1834.

The impact of these technological advances is that history departments may expect students to engage more with original archival sources, and produce a higher standard of work. Some modules will also incorporate alternative assessments that require students to use digital technologies – such as creating podcasts and blogs – thereby helping them build a wider range of transferable skills to aid them in their future careers.

#### Widening participation

The OfS also plays a key role in addressing student inequality. By monitoring access and participation statistics, it has pledged to increase the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, while balancing the disparities in continuation rates and academic performance. If universities and colleges fail to tackle these problems, the OfS has the power to fine or deregister them.

At present, universities do not recruit enough history students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the discipline faring particularly badly in attracting black and minority ethnic (BME) students. According to a 2018 report by the Royal Historical Society, less than 3 per cent of 'domiciled' undergraduates studying history at university identified as BME.

The report also showed that, on average, only 78.4 per cent of the BME undergraduates who enrol on 'history and philosophical studies' courses end up graduating with a first or a 2:1. This is in comparison with the 85.3 per cent of white domiciled students doing so on the same courses, despite them being admitted on similar entry tariffs.

The effects of this attainment gap are far-reaching. BME historians make up just 3 per cent of academic staff employed in UK history departments – fewer than 70 people out of 2,275. The Royal Historical Society draws a direct link between the shortage of staff of colour teaching in the field and the low numbers and poorer degree outcomes of BME history students.

As a result, history departments and societies across the country are looking at ways of encouraging marginalised and



Protesters from the Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action student group occupy Deptford Town Hall. The growing influence of student voices in higher education is leading to major changes in how history is taught

disadvantaged students, with new funding schemes and bursaries aimed at supporting BME historians and those researching BME histories. Hopefully, this will result in better provision for students from a range of backgrounds entering university, and ultimately foster greater diversity among staff.

#### **Decolonising the curriculum**

The growing influence of student voices across higher education has opened space for the flourishing of another key development. This is the grassroots 'decolonisation' movement, kicked off by protests at the University of Cape Town in 2015, when students called for the removal of a statue of controversial colonial leader Cecil Rhodes from campus.

The movement has led to a number of similar initiatives throughout the UK, with students and staff advocating for critical reflection regarding race and diversity in universities. For example, following a 137-day occupation of Deptford Town Hall by the student group Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action earlier this year, the university recently agreed to calls to address the BME attainment gap and racial justice issues.

In history departments, demands for

In some departments the decolonisation movement has led to curriculum reviews, with more diverse modules now on offer inclusivity and decolonisation of the curriculum have had special resonance. Although the movement has faced criticism (chiefly based on the misunderstanding that it calls for the removal of white men and British histories), it has provoked important debates about how we construct history, the stories we choose to tell and what we ignore. From the perspective of academic staff, it is not just about what gets taught, but also how it is taught, and the ways in which students are encouraged to think critically about the present and future, as well as the past.

In some history departments, including at Cambridge, Manchester, SOAS and Warwick, the decolonisation movement has already led to extensive curriculum reviews and a reform of teaching practice and assessment. For students who choose to pursue history degrees in the upcoming years, this is likely to mean, at the very least, a more diverse and global offering of modules, and changes in the way modules are taught.

#### Looking to the future

Overall, students are increasingly seen as equal partners within higher education – not as the passive recipients of whatever the university chooses to offer. These changes continue to be reverberate within history departments and among students, creating a very different experience for those entering the discipline now to even five years ago. Whether this increasing focus on student experience and the issues of inequality and decolonisation will truly result in long-lasting change, however, remains to be seen.

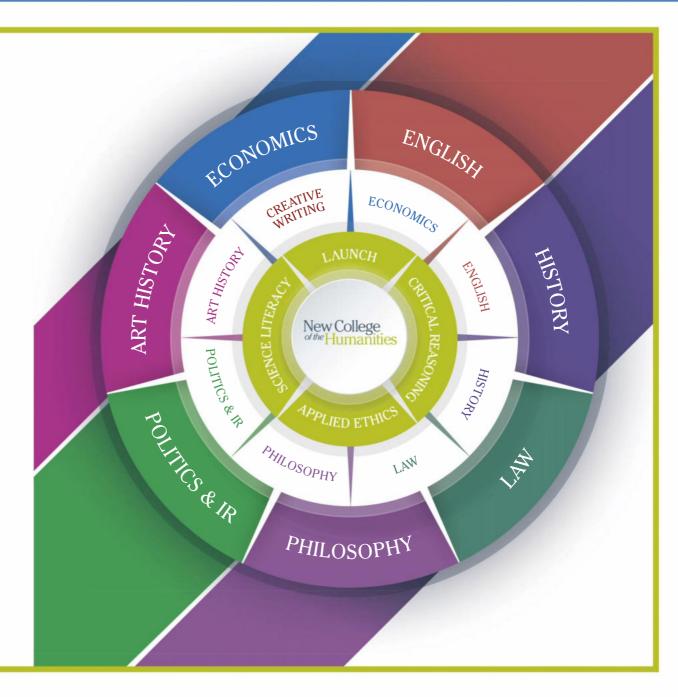
**Dr Meleisa Ono-George** is director of student experience and associate professor of Caribbean history at the University of Warwick

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# 10 top tips for planning your year abroad



Historian and study abroad coordinator **John Gallagher** reveals his advice for undergraduates thinking of taking their studies overseas

or many students, a year abroad is one of the most memorable and enjoyable experiences of their university career. And for students of history, a year abroad offers you the opportunity to discover a new country and its culture while adding a huge amount of value to your degree.

The chance to explore new subjects with new teachers, to delve into a country's history while living and studying there, to learn a language that will supercharge your own research and set you up for your future career – there are so many good reasons to consider a year abroad. Here are some tips for making the most of the opportunity.

#### 1. Decide if a study abroad year is right for you

This is the most important question to ask yourself. A study abroad year is a great adventure, but it's a big undertaking too. Will you be comfortable travelling and living independently, managing your studies and making new friends a long way from home?

If you're unsure, talk to people who've done it before. Ask yourself what you want to get out of it, and that will help you decide if studying abroad is for you – and get you thinking about where you might want to go.

#### 2. Choose a university

It's worth taking the time to find the country and the university for you. Well in advance of decision time, set aside a few hours to do your own research. Don't forget to consult the study abroad team or coordinator in your university or department, who will be happy to chat to you about your options.

When you're thinking about potential destinations, don't just consider the weather and the nightlife (even if they are important!) – have a look at the kind of modules you want to take and the people you'd like to study with. Does the university offer great history modules for you to sink your teeth into? Is it in a historic setting, where you'll be able to observe the influence of the past on the present? Be flexible: some destinations are really popular and very competitive, so be prepared to think about



You'll make friends from all over the world during your year abroad. Sports, volunteering and language exchanges can be great ways of building an international network. And when the year is up, don't forget to keep in touch

options that might not have occurred to you straight away.

#### 3. Prepare for your move

The more you plan for your year overseas, the easier you'll find settling in and getting to know your new host country. Get thinking early about the practicalities of life abroad. Many universities will offer you a place to stay in student accommodation, which can be a great way to meet fellow students (and avoid a long commute to lectures).

Think about medication, insurance, everyday security – even clothing. How do you plan to cover costs when you're out there? You'll need a budget and you'll probably need to save up carefully.

#### 4. Take time to settle in

Make sure you've booked travel well in advance, and that both your home institution and your host university are aware of your travel details. This way, they'll be more easily able to support you if anything goes wrong.

The first few days of a year abroad can be bewildering. Take the time to register at your host university and get to know the campus. Map out your routes to lectures and classes, register with a doctor, and start getting to know your host city. Remember to be aware of cultural differences - do your research in advance and avoid getting into sticky situations.

Why not read up on the history of your new host country before you arrive? That way, things will start making sense more quickly.

#### 5. Select your modules

A study abroad year is a great chance to explore topics that might not be offered at your home university. Many host universities will offer modules on the history or culture of the host country. These are a great way of getting under the skin of the place and can also set you up for a really original dissertation or final year project.

Maybe there's an opportunity to do some in-depth study that will feed into your own research, or to visit sites, libraries or archives that will make your work shine. Take advantage of the expertise and opportunities available at your host university.

#### 6. Learn the language

If you're spending a year in a country where the main language isn't English (even if you're studying in English), you'll likely have the opportunity to study some of the local language. This is a brilliant idea: it enriches your cultural experience while you're abroad, it helps you develop deep and long-lasting relationships with your host country and its people, and it'll leave you with the ability to get by in a whole variety of new situations after your year away. Plus, as a history student, it's the first step to accessing a rich array of foreign sources!

5

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Don't worry if it seems daunting: a little language goes a long way, and a year of beginner's classes will still leave you with some impressive abilities - and maybe the motivation

Living abroad offers an ideal chance to learn a language. Don't be daunted - a little goes a long way

to carry your studies further or use them in your university work or your career.

#### 7. Get to know the people

You've come all this way on your own: now it's time to get to know new people. You'll likely make great international friends who are also studying abroad at your host university.

Sports, volunteering, language exchanges - these can all be great ways of building an international network. And when the year is up, don't forget to keep in touch – you never know when a couch in Colorado or a futon in Frankfurt might come in useful.

#### 8. Travel and discover

Don't think you have to spend the entirety of your year chained up in the library. Cheap student travel deals can put historic sites and exciting trips well within reach. Practice thinking like a historian as you travel around: what do the landscape, the people, the places tell you about the past?

And remember, reading lists aren't just for the classroom. Why not dive into the culture and history of your host country by picking up some reading for pleasure that gives you a sense of place?

#### 9. ... but don't forget to study!

There's so much exciting stuff to do during a year abroad, but it's still important to keep on top of your academic work. Make sure you're clear on what your host and home universities require of you.

Remember that different countries have different academic approaches, and you may encounter very different styles of writing and assessment, from research papers to oral exams. The key to handling this is to always ask for advice.

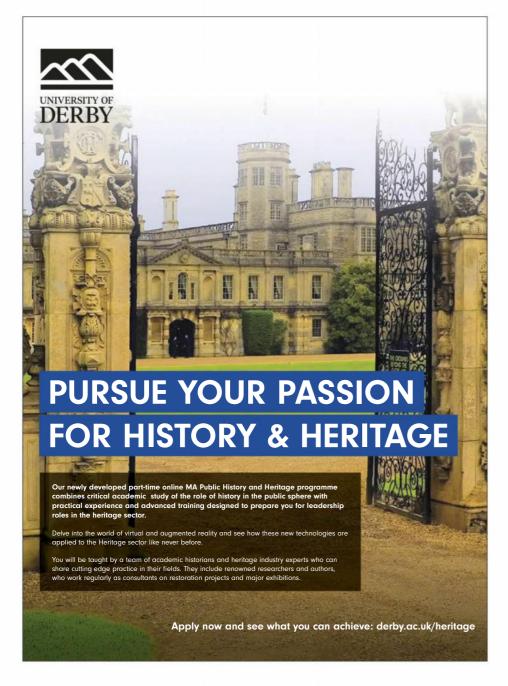
#### 10. Bring something back

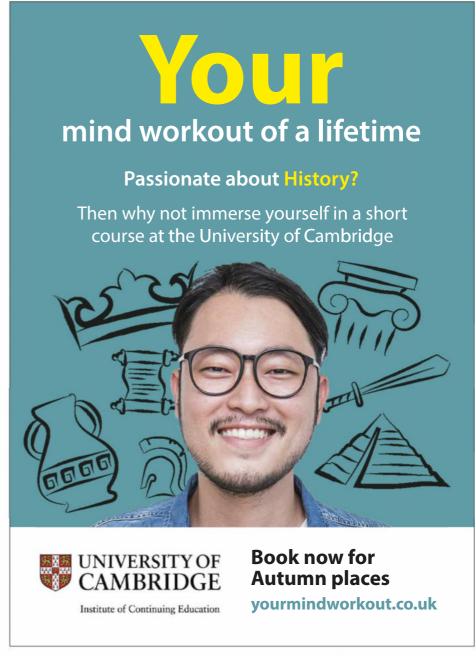
Your year abroad doesn't finish when you step on the plane home. You will return with new experiences and understanding, with greater knowledge of a country's history and culture, and maybe even with a new language. As your year abroad comes to an end,

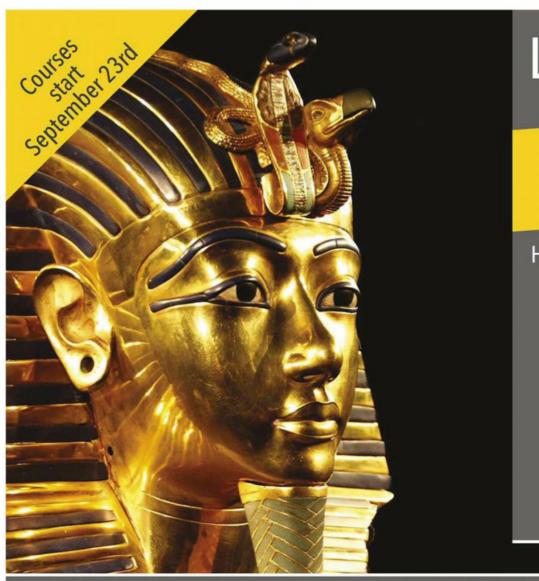
> think about ways to put your new knowledge to use, in your university career and beyond. You're a citizen of

the world now – what are you going to do next? **II** 

Dr John Gallagher is lecturer in early modern history and study abroad coordinator for the School of History at the University of Leeds







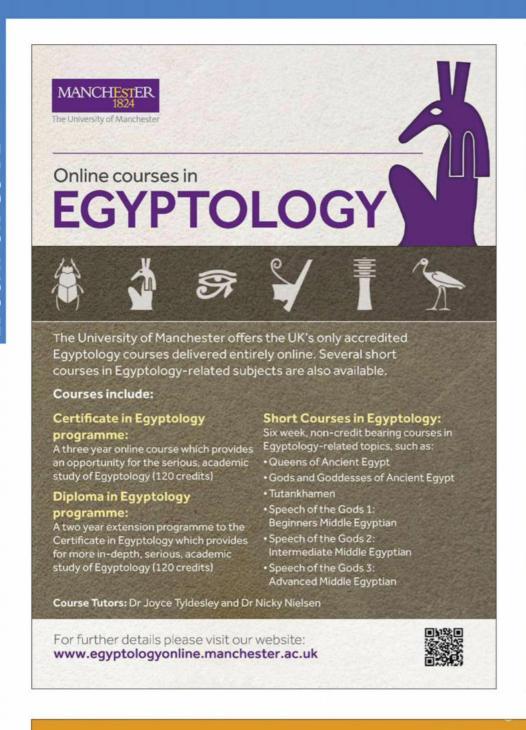
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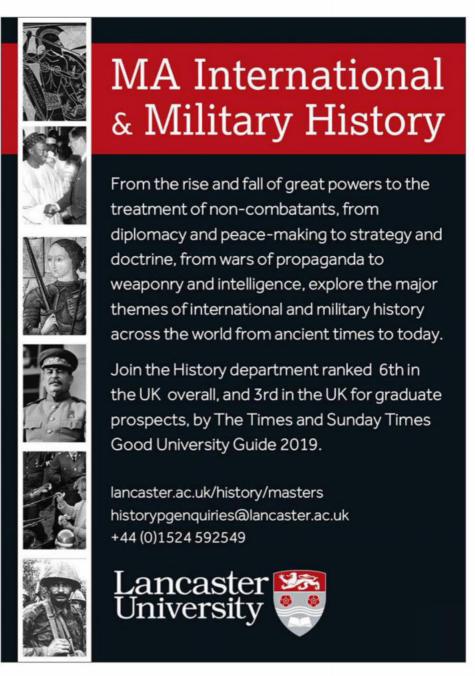
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# How my history degree has helped me

Six graduates reveal how studying history at university furnished them with all they needed for success in a wide range of careers



Sarah Callanan
Current job: Senior policy advisor
Studied: BA History & MA
History of International

I've been a policy advisor at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for almost nine years. Primarily, my job is to develop policy proposals and advice for ministers, and in my career I've been lucky enough to work in a range of areas, including planning, housing and public service transformation.

Relations, LSE

I've always been fascinated by the causes and reasons behind things, and love to catch a glimpse of the past. Studying history helped hone my ability to assess vast quantities of often incomplete information, weigh it up and use it to construct arguments. I use these critical and analytical skills every day of my working life.



Victoria Ribbans
Current job: Deputy head
of communications
Studied: BA History,
University of Warwick

My job often involves being slap-bang in the middle of history, as my team looks after the media operations at Westminster Abbey. For a big news event like a royal wedding or state visit by the US president, my role is to make sure the cameras are in the right position, and that reporters get their stories.

A love of history helps, because I am motivated to make sure everything is chronicled for posterity. Not just in the obvious way of having a grasp on the abbey's history, but also because I can consume information fast, analyse it, pick out the relevant bits, and then present a convincing argument. I appreciate the long view, how events have consequences, and that context is absolutely everything.

I haven't always worked in a historical environment, though. I spent many years in PR and used the same skills there.

an ideal springboard for helping the press document events at the abbey



Pioneering barrister Rose Heilbron features in Dana Denis-Smith's First 100 Years project



**Claire Miles** Current job: Regional engagement officer Studied: BA History, **Aberystwyth University** 

I work in regional economic development in the public sector. Brexit has meant a lot of change, and currently my job consists mainly of policy and lobbying work. This involves constructing well-evidenced arguments to maintain funding levels, and then communicating them clearly to various levels of government.

My history degree has furnished me with the perfect set of skills to do this. It also means that when ministers come out with new policy statements, I can use the critical reasoning I developed in my degree to truly analyse what they're saying – and what they're not saying!

I firmly believe that looking to the past helps us understand the world we're living in today. In these uncertain times, understanding history is becoming more and more important.



Alice Hearing Current job: Social media journalist Studied: BA History, **University of Southampton** 

I'm a social media journalist at the *Financial Times*, having previously worked in the same role for *The Economist*. My typical working day includes running and curating all of the newspaper's online feeds with my colleagues in the social media team, while working closely with journalists in the newsroom to come up with interesting ideas to engage our audience.

I've often felt that understanding the links between the past and present can be like piecing together a story. In the same way that I like to spend time reading theories about books or TV shows, I also enjoy coming up with explanations as to why certain real-life events may have occurred. This is a crucial part of my job, and my history degree definitely helps.



Dana Denis-Smith Current job: Lawyer and entrepreneur Studied: **BSc International** History, LSE

After graduating, I initially worked as a journalist before qualifying as a lawyer. I am now an entrepreneur, having founded my own business, Obelisk Support, in 2010. The company connects businesses with legal services on demand and is named after Cleopatra's Needle in London - which tells you how much I love history!

Thankfully, I also get to use my degree skills on a regular basis through my work for Spark21, a charity I founded three years ago to celebrate, inform and inspire future generations of women in law. Specifically, Spark21 manages the First 100 Years project (first100years.org.uk), which I set up to mark the centenary of women being able to practise as lawyers for the first time in December 2019.

Without my history degree, I doubt I would have approached the project in the way that I have. After putting together a chronology of women legal pioneers and social changes since 1919, I used my history skills to commission 100 biographical documentary films focusing on key individuals. This has now expanded to become a wider multimedia project that also includes a book, podcast series and exhibition, representing the largest oral history archive of these trailblazing women that the profession has ever had.



**Neil Webber** Current job: **Defence** engineering project manager Studied: BA History and American Studies,

**Keele University** 

I've worked for Defence Equipment and Support, the procurement arm of the Ministry of Defence, for 17 years. I'm responsible for support solutions for the Royal Navy's newest warships, analysing how they are designed and built so the Navy can look after them for their entire lifespans.

I've loved history ever since, aged five, I saw a picture of a Roman soldier. It gives us a base to understand the world and humanity's place in it; it allows us to understand how people acted and why they did; and it is full of enthralling, exciting and unknown stories.

I use my degree daily, assessing information for accuracy and then using the results to form coherent arguments. A history degree has also given me perspective – whatever pressure I am under, others have been here before and thrived.





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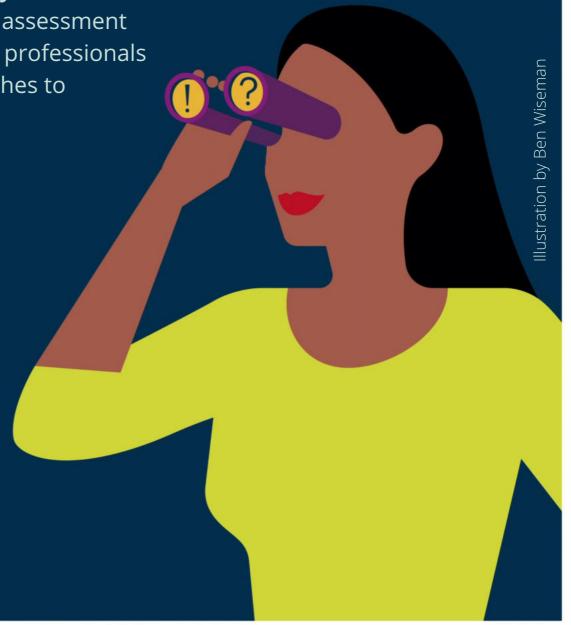
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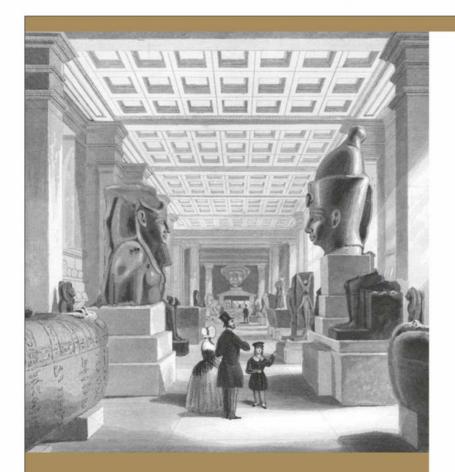
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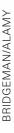
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#### **ROME ON TRIAL**

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Catherine Nixey reviews *Infamy: The Crimes*of Ancient Rome > page 84

#### **INTERVIEW**

"It was fantastically dangerous. The only way the crews could see was to fly in moonlight"

Max Hastings discusses *Chastise*: *The Dambusters Story, 1943* > page 76

#### **WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**

"To look at these years is to see how many ways the war could have taken a different turn"

**Sam Willis on** *The British Are Coming: The War for America, 1775–1777* > page 85

# "While the Dambuster raid's strategic impact was almost nil, its propaganda value was immense"

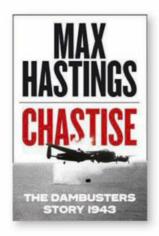
**SIR MAX HASTINGS** talks to Rob Attar about his new book on the RAF's celebrated attack on the Ruhr dams, which combines tales of heroism with descriptions of a "biblical catastrophe"

On the night of 16–17 May 1943 a squadron of RAF bombers, led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, attacked a number of dams in the Ruhr industrial heartland of Germany. Operation Chastise used 'bouncing bombs' conceived by the British engineer Barnes Wallis to evade the dams' defences. Two of those dams – the Möhne and the Eder – were breached, although the Sorpe crucially evaded serious damage. Of the 133 men who set off that night, 53 died and another three were taken prisoner. Meanwhile around 1,300 people were killed by the flood waters. The story of the Dambusters was immortalised in a 1955 film.

**Rob Attar:** Where did the idea to attack dams originate? **Sir Max Hastings:** The RAF figured out back in 1937–38 that if it was possible to destroy the Ruhr industry's water supplies, it would strike a devastating blow at the heart of Nazi industry. So they knew they wanted to do it but they didn't know how.

Then a very bright man called Arthur Collins discovered that if you placed it right up against the dam wall, a much smaller charge could break the dam than if you exploded it even 10 or 20 feet away. He thought that about 6,000 or 7,000 pounds of explosive might do the business, and the Avro Lancaster, the new heavy bomber, might be able to carry that. But how did you deliver that charge right up against the dam wall?

Here, Collins's research married with that of Barnes Wallis, who believed that they could get a big depth charge – which was what it really was, rather than a bomb – and bounce it across the water, over the torpedo nets guarding the dams. And it might then be possible to get a big enough charge to the dam to explode it.



# Chastise: The Dambusters Story 1943

by Sir Max Hastings (William Collins, 464 pages, £25)

#### How much of a challenge was it going to be to deliver a 'bomb' in that fashion?

I only use the word 'hero' very sparingly but I think it's right to use it of these young aircrew who were recruited to the newly formed 617 Squadron. They were asked to do something very difficult: to drop one of these bouncing bombs from a height of 60 feet – less than the length of a cricket pitch – not in a nimble fighter but in a heavy bomber, while steering straight and level towards the dams and, in the case of the Möhne, with anti-aircraft guns shooting at them. It was a monstrously unfair thing to ask of these guys. Heavy bombers are like people carriers, not Lamborghinis; they're great, galumphing load carriers.

#### What did the raid's planners hope to achieve?

Both Barnes Wallis and Charles Portal, the head of the RAF, convinced themselves that if they could break the Möhne, this would strike a huge blow against German industry. But actually, the experts at the Ministry of Economic Warfare warned them early in 1942 that the key to the Ruhr water supplies were two dams: the Möhne and the Sorpe. The Sorpe was a great earthen dam and they knew you couldn't bounce a bomb towards it because it had a sloping face. And also it was such an enormous construction that even Wallis, at his most optimistic, thought that it would take four or five of his bombs to do the business.

They had to face the fact that the most they were going to be able to achieve was to make a hell of a mess in north-west Germany and cause the Germans a lot of embarrassment and inconvenience. But by then the squadron was trained and a huge industrial effort and technological effort had been put into creating these bombs. And they knew that even breaching the Möhne was going to be spectacular.

The key thing is that in 1943 the British people were pretty tired and our reputation in the eyes of the Americans stood pretty low. Everybody could see that the tide of the war was turning, but they could also see that the Russians were doing most of the heavy lifting. Churchill understood the need for what I call military theatre. Even if you couldn't do big things like launch D-Day, you could at least do things that had a spectacular effect.

Everybody told each other a lot of fibs before the raid but I think if I'd been sitting where Charles Portal was sitting in 1943, desperate for some spectacular successes, then I would have thought that it was a fair gamble. In fact Portal said, in one of his papers before the dams' raid: "This looks like a good gamble." And I think it was. But we should never underrate what these kids were being asked to do.

#### How did the raid itself go?

It was fantastically dangerous. The only way the crews had a hope of seeing enough to be able to attack the dams was to fly in moonlight, in which Bomber Command never normally operated because the Germans could see you so easily. And they made the calculation that the only way they had a chance of getting there was to fly all the way at deck level. But flying at 60 or 100 feet, you face a big risk of hitting power cables. Meanwhile, the anti-aircraft gunners can hear you coming even before they see you and they're firing at practically point-blank range. So it is not surprising that three of the 19 aircraft that took off were destroyed by power cables or by a searchlight, while more were shot down by flak.

What is miraculous is that enough got through to be able to break the Möhne and the Eder: it was an extraordinary feat. But it cost eight



aircraft lost out of 19, and a couple more that turned back at the beginning. That was nearly a 50 per cent loss rate and everybody knew you couldn't run an operation like that very often. It's interesting that, after the raid, when they were recruiting to bring 617 Squadron back up to strength, they had a lot of trouble finding volunteers. Everybody knew that the casualties had been frightful and they thought that, if there are going to be any more operations like this, then this is not a place you want to be.

Because they failed to break the Sorpe, not much is normally made of that part of the raid. But those pilots and their crews, they flew over the Sorpe again and again to figure out how to make an approach that gave them a chance of dropping the bomb. If the Germans had been awake, which amazingly they weren't, they could have vectored night fighters there. Incredibly they didn't do it, but the crews had no way of knowing that.

Joe McCarthy, the one American on the trip, only dropped his bomb on the 10th or 11th run. It's not surprising that one or two in the crew were saying in the intercom: "Can we just get this f-ing bomb out of here?" And what one always has to remember about what makes bomber war unusual is that, unlike being a soldier, you don't have personal choice as to whether to be brave in battle. If your captain decides to be brave, you've got to go with him all the way.

I can't help suspecting that there must have been more than one member of Guy Gibson's crew – who astoundingly flew round the Möhne about four or five times – who were thinking: "Well, it's alright for him if he wants to win a VC but what about us poor bastards?"

#### What was the impact of the attacks on the people living close to the dams?

When I grew up, one of the things that seemed wonderful about the raid is that it was victimless, apart from the 53 air crew lost. But, of course, somewhere between 1,200 and 1,400 people were drowned – more than half of them slave labourers and prisoners of war. You suddenly had hundreds of millions of tonnes of water being unleashed, pouring down the valley, creating what I call a biblical catastrophe. I've devoted a whole chapter to the stories of what happened when this wave of water, 40ft high, came smashing through. You had whole houses being borne down the flood.

If you want to take the ruthless view, you can say this was a price the German people had to pay for Hitler. They had supported Hitler; they were fighting for Hitler until 1945; and this is the sort of stuff that happens. And plenty of British civilians had been killed: men, women and children.

But it was still a terrifying story and we have to see that side of it. It's not enough to say: "Whoops, didn't we do brilliantly well, wasn't it wonderful, gee whiz." We have to also say that this inflicted a terrible human disaster, even if this doesn't negate the courage of the people who took part.

In his memoir, *Enemy Coast Ahead*, Guy Gibson himself wrote about how uncomfortable he had been when one or two of his crew, on the way home from the raid, were making pretty callous remarks about all those people being drowned. And he wrote: "No one likes mass slaughter and we did not like being the authors of it. Besides, it brought us in line with Himmler and his boys."

I suspect that one or two of Guy Gibson's crew were thinking: 'It's alright for him if he wants to win a VC but what about us poor bastards?'



**Dam busted** An aerial view of the Möhne dam showing the damage caused by Operation Chastise. The floodwaters killed more than 1,200 people

#### How did the raid affect the German war machine?

It had a tremendous shock effect. When Albert Speer, Hitler's armaments chief, flew over the area at first light he was horrified and thought this was going to be a complete disaster. But he was amazed at how quickly production was restored. The raid made an incredible mess, killed all these wretched people, and was a terrific psychological blow, but its impact on German industry was very limited.

I would still say it was worth it because it gave a huge boost to the morale of the British people and raised the standing of the British in the eyes of the Americans. So while its strategic impact was almost nil, in the grand scheme of things, its propaganda impact was immense.

There was one huge mistake made by Arthur Harris [head of Bomber Command], partly because he had thought the whole thing was ridiculous anyway. Through the summer of 1943, there was a vast edifice of wooden scaffolding up in front of the dams, and Speer was dreading a conventional RAF bombing raid, which only had to be reasonably accurate and this great cat's cradle would come tumbling down. But the RAF made no attempt to break it down. Speer made plain, if they'd wrecked the repair work then it could have led to serious trouble. As it was, the Möhne and the Eder were both operational by September, when the autumn rains came, and that winter they were doing the business again for German industry.

Back in 1979, I interviewed Barnes Wallis and he said the big mistake was not to have launched a follow-up raid. When I interviewed Sir Arthur Harris, I put this point to him and he said: "Any operation deserving of the Victoria Cross is, by its nature, unfit to be repeated." Now, he was right that, as the Germans had put up all these balloon cables and flak guns and searchlights, you couldn't ever do another low-level bouncing bomb raid. But you could have done a conventional raid, and that was a huge error.

#### How much is our modern view of the raid shaped by the film?

We all think we know the Dambusters story, but most of that is wrong because it's so much influenced by the movie. And it's a great movie:

it's the most popular British war movie of all time, and deservedly so. But the portrayal of most of the characters was a lot different from what they were actually like, and the story wasn't of Barnes Wallis fighting a lone battle against an unthinking bureaucracy. What was really remarkable was that, in the middle of a war of national survival, when resources were very scarce, Britain's warlords supported this amazing venture.

#### MORE FROM US

Listen to Rob Attar's interview with Sir Max Hastings on our podcast soon at historyextra.com/podcast



# NAZI GERMANY

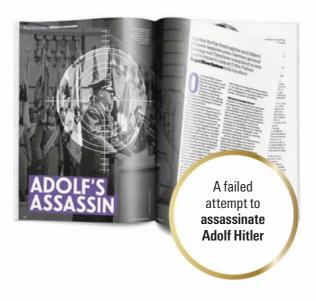
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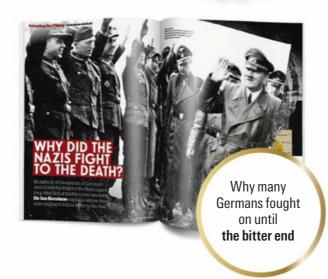
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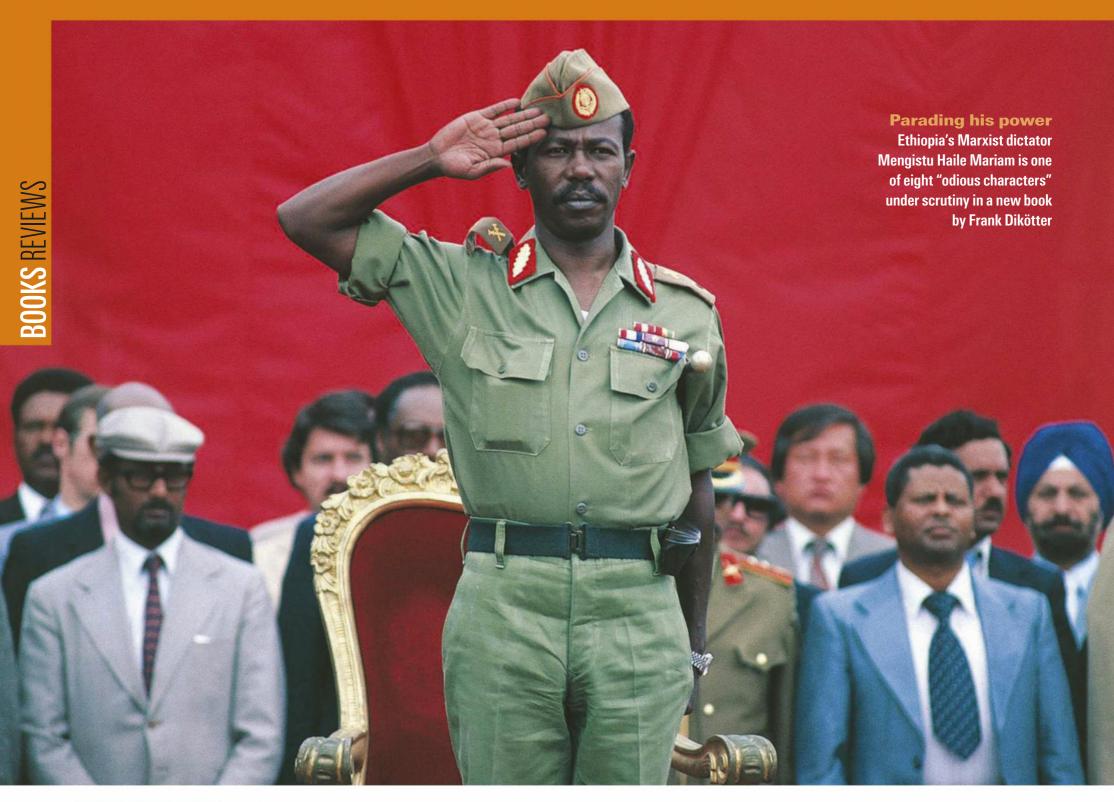
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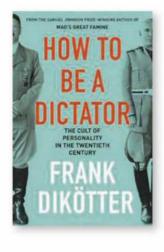
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In 1978, the Czech dissident (and later president) Václav Havel wrote an

extended essay, published by the *samizdat* underground, entitled *The Power of the Powerless*. One of the most important texts

on understanding modern totalitarianism, the essay contains the parable of a greengrocer who displays the sign 'Workers of the World, Unite!' in his shop window – not as a symbol of his enthusiasm for communism, but as an indicator of his craven submission to it. The greengrocer, Havel tells us, does not believe in the communist cause, he is merely going through the motions, doing what is expected by the regime. He is "living a lie".

The world of Havel's mythical greengrocer would doubtless chime with that presented by Frank Dikötter in *How to Be a Dictator*. The author, a professor at the University of Hong Kong and an authority on modern

Chinese history, has penned an illuminating study of some of the 20th century's most egregious cults of personality, all of which fashioned preposterous new realities to which their people seemingly had no choice but to submit.

Dikötter casts his net widely, including some of the most odious characters that modern history has to offer. Of course several of the usual suspects are present, such as the faux-imperator Mussolini, the anti-personality Hitler and the original Big Brother, Stalin. But a host of less well-known cults are also included, from the grasping selfaggrandisement of Romania's undeniably

vile Nicolae Ceaușescu to the voodoo manipulation of Haiti's 'Papa Doc' Duvalier.

Each of Dikötter's eight subjects is presented, in essence, in a potted biography, which explains their background and rise to power. Dikötter then outlines the peculiarities of their rules: the excesses, the vanity projects and the megalomania. The studies are well-drawn and full of illuminating nuggets. We learn, for instance, that Mussolini took on many of the trappings of sainthood; his birthplace of Predappio became a place of pilgrimage; and some schoolchildren learned a new credo, beginning: "I believe in the supreme Duce..." The cult of Stalin, meanwhile, flourished at the same time as the USSR was wracked by the Great Purge. In between signing death warrants, the Vozhd met with fawning artists, writers and painters, all eager to burnish his image further.

Beyond the usual suspects, the more unfamiliar subjects are perhaps the most hideously engaging. Mengistu Haile Mariam, for instance, the Marxist dictator of Ethiopia from the 1970s to the early 1990s, had the former emperor Haile Selassie buried beneath his desk. Meanwhile in Haiti, 'Papa Doc' Duvalier modelled himself on the character of Baron Samedi, the top-hatted Voodoo spirit of the dead. In China, meanwhile, whole sectors of industry were devoted to churning out postcards, badges and photos of the Great Helmsman, Mao, not to mention printing the countless millions of copies of his 'Little Red Book'.

The vaunting arrogance of Ceauşescu never ceases to amaze. A former cobbler who rose to power in communist Romania thanks largely to cunning and brute force, he was nonetheless portrayed to his benighted people as an intellectual titan, a towering ideologist of world Marxism, and a leader to rank alongside Julius Caesar, Napoleon and Alexander the Great. The overwrought eulogies were even extended to his wife, Elena, who was lauded as Romania's premier scientist, engineer and academic, garnering a host of awards and titles in the process.

While the Ceauşescus got their comeuppance in front of a Christmas firing squad in 1989, and Mussolini's corpse was strung up from a Milan petrol station in 1945, some of Dikötter's subjects had the extraordinary good fortune to die in their beds. Kim Il-sung, for instance, the whey-faced founder of communist North Korea, spent more than 40 years as Suryong, or Great Leader, before dying of a heart attack at the age of 82. His death was greeted with a veritable tidal wave of competitive grief, with many mourners seeking to outdo one another by feigning swoons and collapses, or shaking their fists in mock rage.

Such reactions are certainly remarkable, and – like Havel's greengrocer – appear to point to a society that is merely conforming to what is ordered or expected, rather than expressing genuine emotion. That is very much Dikötter's position. As he tells the reader, the illusion of popular support must be created, and for that, the cult of personality is a vital tool. The people acquiesce in the fiction, he suggests, out of fear and then habit.

Dikötter does an excellent job of exposing how the various personality cults that his subjects fostered assumed a role right "at the

# The vaunting arrogance of Ceauşescu never ceases to amaze. He portrayed himself as a leader to rank alongside Caesar, Napoleon and Alexander the Great

very heart of tyranny"; they were an essential component of any self-respecting totalitarian system. But there is more to totalitarianism – and there is more to 'being a dictator' – than personality cults alone. Other legitimating factors, including ideology, progress and liberation, also served to bolster popular support for those regimes.

Also, though the cynical interpretation favoured by Dikötter – of populations conforming without believing – might have been realistic during the late-model communism of Havel's Czechoslovakia or Kim's North Korea, or even Mao's China, it is less clear that the early totalitarian regimes of Mussolini, Hitler or Stalin necessarily followed the same pattern. Back then, in a simpler age, it is reasonable to assume that a good proportion of popular enthusiasm was genuine; that people honestly 'believed'. Hard evidence is fragmentary and necessarily sparse, but the assumption is a fair one.

The lack of such nuanced arguments is frustrating, but Dikötter's book is nonetheless a very useful and well-written examination of some of the worst examples of cults of personality that the 20th century witnessed. It doesn't suffice on its own to explain the phenomenon of totalitarianism, but it certainly throws that dystopian world – with its toadying sycophants, megalomaniacs and ridiculous excesses – into sharp relief. **H** 

**Roger Moorhouse** is an author and historian. His most recent book is *First to Fight: The Polish War* 1939 (Bodley Head, 2019)

#### FROM FACT TO FICTION

#### Reading the past

**Elizabeth MacDonald** on her novel about a scholarly medieval monk, *A Matter of Interpretation* 

#### What drew you to stories of scholarship in medieval Europe?

The circulation of knowledge is a precarious business. Underpinning individual instances of genius is a dense network of hard graft, carried out by a silent army of diligent, self-sacrificing drones.

I have a particular regard for the self-effacing medieval translators who, in the face of great odds, built bridges between the knowledge-starved Dark Ages and the splendours of the classical world. Through illuminated manuscripts, they painstakingly brought back to life knowledge and languages that had nearly slipped from our grasp.

#### Were you inspired by any real medieval manuscripts in particular?

The Book of Kells made a vivid impression on me as a child growing up in Dublin. So too did the haiku-like poems Irish monks sometimes left in the margins of the manuscripts they were compiling, which offered startlingly evocative glimpses of life in the Dark Ages. Later, I came across the 11th-century manuscript known as Al-Tasrif ('The Method of Medicine'). I was enthralled by its illustrations of surgical instruments, most of which were unknown in Christendom.

#### What makes a young medieval monk an interesting protagonist for you?

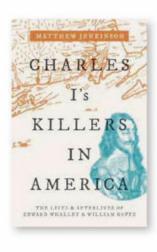
For churchmen, the Middle Ages were a time of internationalism. My wayward but indomitable monk, Michael Scot, sets out from the wilds of Scotland in order to absorb the vast learning to be gained in the opulent cities of southern Europe. Here, he finds himself a barbarian outsider. Despite the church's promotion of education, what it gave with one hand, it took back with the other, and Michael Scot struggles to balance his own ambitions with the

exacting framework of obedience imposed



# Marked men

**ANN HUGHES** enjoys a myth-busting account of two men who signed Charles I's death warrant and were forced to flee to the New World when England's monarchy was restored



Charles I's Killers in America: The Lives & Afterlives of Edward Whalley & William Goffe by Matthew Jenkinson OUP, 288 pages, £20

In 1675, colonists in the Massachusetts town of Hadley were

apparently rescued from indigenous inhabitants during the conflict known to the English as King Philip's War. In their "utmost confusion", a "grave elderly person" appeared, inspiring them to drive their enemies away. This "Angel of Hadley" turned out to be William Goffe, an experienced soldier who had taken refuge in New England with his father-in-law, Edward Whalley, in 1660. Both men had signed the death warrant of Charles I and were consequently marked men at the Restoration. Rather than suffer martyrdom, they had boarded a ship for New England only days before Charles II landed in Dover.

Jenkinson's book seeks to distinguish the actual experiences of Goffe and Whalley in New England from the legends that grew up around them – in books that claimed historical validity, but also in novels, plays, pictures, poems and oral traditions. The story of the 'Angel of Hadley' is a rare survivor of Jenkinson's forensic, sceptical treatment. Although it was first recorded by the governor of Massachusetts Bay some 90 years later, Jenkinson concludes there may be something in it. There is a coherent oral tradition; Whalley and Goffe lived in Hadley from 1664; and Goffe was still alive.

Most of the other stories turn out to be wishful thinking. Whalley's alleged participation in a rebellion in Virginia is discounted on the grounds that he was already dead, while an account of his life in Maryland is deemed "novel but wholly incorrect", not least because it required him to live to the age of 103. Jenkinson spends rather too much time debunking the most improbable accounts. His book is more valuable in demonstrating *why* Whalley and Goffe were such fertile sources for myth-making.

The regicides were most attractive to supporters of the American revolution. They were portrayed as defenders of liberty against tyranny, representing America's thirst for independence and the essence of its new identity as a nation. This framework was first established by Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College in 1794. It persisted with variations until the Second World War.

In all these accounts, the regicides are portrayed as hunted men, targets of a vengeful

The regicides were portrayed as defenders of liberty, representing America's thirst for independence and its new identity as a nation

monarch and his colonial lackeys. Hence the 'tyrant' George III could be compared to Charles II. Jenkinson's careful analysis presents a more prosaic, ambiguous reality. There was considerable sympathy for the regicides' cause in early America, compounded by fears of greater control from England. Colonial governors went through the motions of cooperating with agents who came with warrants for the regicides' capture to avoid open defiance of English authority, but they were in practice mostly obstructive, while Charles II himself did not pursue revenge for long. Jenkinson concludes that Goffe and Whalley were only briefly in "real danger", when they sought shelter for up to three months in a remote cave in 1661. Rather, they led restricted and uncomfortable lives in New England, before both died undramatically in borrowed beds.

**Ann Hughes** is professor of early modern history at Keele University

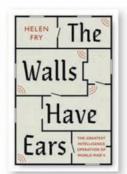




**King killed** When Charles I (painted here by Anthony van Dyck) was executed in 1649, Edward Whalley and William Goffe signed his death warrant. On Charles II's Restoration, the pair were forced into exile

#### ESPIONAGE

#### Listening in



The Walls Have Ears: The Greatest Intelligence Operation of World War II

by Helen Fry Yale, 336 pages, £18.99

There should be a ban on books claiming to tell the 'greatest' anything related to the Second World War. Having read this book, however, I suspect that the title was not the author's idea but the publisher's. The real scope of the book itself is far more modest than its moniker suggests; at no point does it claim to depict the 'greatest intelligence operation of World War II'. What it does do is actually far more interesting.

To her very great credit, Helen Fry has

succeeded in writing a fantastically original and readable account of the various 'listening' – or bugging – operations undertaken by British intelligence on captured German prisoners of war.

The idea of covertly eavesdropping on the conversations of captured prisoners – from ordinary servicemen to high-ranking German generals – was developed from the earliest days of the war. Initial efforts began at the Tower of London but soon spread to different locations, including the comfortable surroundings of the requisitioned stately home Trent Park. Fry details the idea behind the efforts, as well as the intelligence goodies that emerged, ranging from valuable military intelligence about naval operations and the development of new weapons to shockingly frank discussions about war crimes and concentration camps.

Intermingled with stories of those being listened in on are equally compelling stories of those doing the listening. At times there's a powerful irony to this, as we witness

émigré German Jews translating the conversations of senior Nazis – conversations that are assumed to be taking place in secret.

Running through the narrative is a focus on an important central figure: British intelligence officer Colonel Thomas Kendrick, the mastermind of the whole operation. Indeed, the book is as much his biography as it is an account of the eavesdropping efforts. The two stories are inextricably connected.

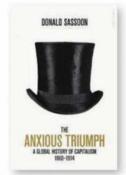
The big question, of course, is what results did these efforts produce? Did the intelligence gathered really change anything? Fry is circumspect in her conclusions. She makes no bold claims and modestly suggests that too little is known about the operations to warrant an answer. Even though it may not document the 'greatest intelligence operation of the war', this is nonetheless a great book and a valuable contribution to scholarship on the Second World War.

**Michael Goodman,** professor of intelligence and international affairs at King's College London

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#### **ECONOMICS**

#### **Nervous times**



#### The Anxious Triumph: A Global History of Capitalism, 1860–1914

by Donald Sassoon Allen Lane, 800 pages, £30

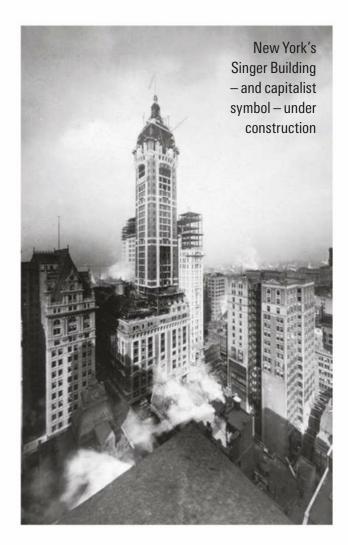
In 2019, the world faces a backlash against the

'hyper-globalisation' that hit a crisis with the financial meltdown of 2008. Threats of protectionism and trade warfare are undermining the postwar multilateral order created by the US, a country turning towards economic nationalism. Donald Sassoon's brilliant book offers a highly original and perceptive historical reflection on our current plight by considering the explosion of global capitalism in the late 19th century, which met its nemesis in the First World War. His range is impressive, roaming across the globe with rich detail and insight, and his writing is fast-paced and accessible.

Sassoon is less interested in how capitalism worked than in the political and cultural responses it provoked. His concern is with how different societies and states reacted to an economic system that was, and is, in permanent flux. Unlike the political projects of socialism or communism, capitalism has "no mind, no politics, and no unity". Its "only criterion of success is its own survival, which depends on constant change". Anxiety inevitably follows. Sassoon's aim is to show how societies responded to this uncertainty as capitalism triumphed and, for the first time, went truly global. Deeper interconnections as a result of mass migration, international capital flows and a surge in trade meant that a crisis could no longer be contained but would have global ramifications – a situation that first arose in the 1870s.

Sassoon's most important theme is that capitalism needed the state. It did and does coexist with many types of regimes, and does not need – as was falsely claimed by the 'Washington consensus' of the latter part of the 20th century – a neoliberal rolling back of the state. Quite the contrary. Although there were popular anti-capitalism movements before the First World War, the triumph of capitalism was never really doubted – above all by socialists, who assumed that it was an inevitable stage in societal development.

Supporters of capitalism realised that its preservation and success depended on reform in order to reduce anxieties. The growth of dynamic capitalism went hand-in-hand with the emergence of the nation state, which secured tax revenues for the provision of a social safety net and built institutions that were vital for economic success. The danger was that the nation state could spill over into destructive nationalism, as it did in the First World War and 'beggar my



neighbour' policies of the 1930s.

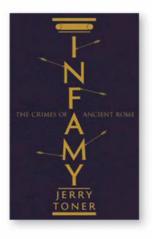
In telling the story of a previous age of globalisation, Sassoon's book underlines the importance of international institutions in creating a new balance – now threatened by a resurgence of nationalism.

**Martin Daunton**, emeritus professor of economic history, University of Cambridge

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# Emperors on trial

**CATHERINE NIXEY** salutes an original and witty take on the bad behaviour of Rome's emperors - a book filled with lurid stories of greed, violence and dubious personal morals



Infamy: The Crimes of Ancient Rome by Jerry Toner Profile, 320 pages, £16.99

"Infamy! Infamy!
They've all got it in for
me." So Kenneth
Williams' Julius Caesar
declared in the 1964 film
Carry on Cleo. The same,

Jerry Toner argues in his new book *Infamy*, might be said of Rome itself. From the pages of Tacitus to the HBO series *Rome*, people have long portrayed this empire as "a place of infamy, riven with savagery, sin and corruption". Not, it must be said, entirely without reason.

Take Caesar himself. In 58 BC, desperate to raise money and his profile, he began his Gallic Wars. Eight years later, a million Gauls were enslaved and a million more were dead. Other rulers were little better. In AD 25, Tiberius forced a rich man to leave him everything in his will – then compelled him to commit suicide. Then, of course, there was Nero, who reportedly slept with his mother then killed her – and then kicked his pregnant wife to death. But was the whole empire so bad? Here, to settle the question once and for all, Toner puts "Rome on trial" in order to "decide if the Romans were really any worse than us".

It's a nifty idea from an author who has previously had other nifty ideas – Toner's previous books include *How to Manage Your Slaves*, which advised on such thorny matters as whether one should sleep with one's slave (in short: absolutely – just make sure you don't get carried away and pay too much for an attractive one at the slave market). Happily, Toner doesn't just have good ideas; he also has a talent for execution.

The book divides Rome's crimes into sections (morality, gluttony, war) then puts the evidence for and against in each case. It's a crisp, clever structure that does away with the usual tedious demands for narrative, chronology, dates and whatnot. Instead it allows Toner to focus purely on the good bits – in other words, the bad ones.

Which, it must be said, were pretty bad. Take Elagabalus (c204–222), one of the many emper-



In the dock A statue of Rome's first emperor, Augustus. A new book by Jerry Toner examines the scandals surrounding the empire's leaders to "decide if the Romans were really any worse than us"

# People have long portrayed Rome as 'riven with savagery, corruption and sin'. Not, it must be said, entirely without reason

ors whose vicious crimes left him loathed by his people and loved by later historians. He allegedly chose members of his staff by the size of their, well, members; raped a Vestal virgin; and carried out human sacrifices. A few chapters in, and the case for the prosecution is looking pretty strong.

However, Toner, a classics fellow at Cambridge, is too good a historian to take such yarns at face value. Much of what we think of Rome today has been shaped either by elite historians or by later Christian authors. Both had their own agendas, demonising previous regimes (mortal or divine) to flatter the ones

in which they were writing. Narratives of Rome thus always tend to contrast a hellish past with a halcyon present.

This comparison is often made unfairly. There certainly was some high-profile violence in Rome, but emperors' behaviour was not the norm. And Christianity, for all its talk of love and peace, actually changed very little. Slaves were not emancipated, women were not elevated and the state, if anything, grew more vicious. Indeed, there was an "increase in judicial savagery" under Christian rule. As Toner also notes, the rise of this new religion "probably changed the rhetoric concerning crime more than crime itself".

That is just one fascinating insight among many in this superb book, which lifts the burden of guilt (a little) from ancient Rome. All the same, if Elagabalus sits next to you at dinner, you might want to move to another seat.

**Catherine Nixey** is the author of *The Darkening Age: The Christian Destruction of the Classical World* (Macmillan, 2017)

#### UNITED STATES

## Colonial revolt

**SAM WILLIS** is enthralled by a new account of the crucial early years of the American War of Independence



The British Are Coming: The War for America, 1775–1777 by Rick Atkinson William Collins,

There are few greater challenges in writing military history than tackling the American

776 pages, £25

War of Independence. The first problem is scale. From first breath to last gasp, the war lasted eight years, making it one of the longest conflicts in American history.

It involved armies and navies immense in scale. The naval sphere was particularly complex at the time and demands careful attention from historians now. No fewer than 22 separate navies fought in the war, and did so on five different oceans. There were also naval campaigns enacted in rivers, as well as some in entirely land-locked lakes.

In terms of narrative, it is easy to become lost. There are no simple themes to follow, as everything is linked to everything else in a formidable, and moveable, web. What happened in Paris affected what happened at sea, which affected what happened in Boston – and Charleston, the West Indies, Madrid and India – for make no mistake, this was a global war. This made things hugely complicated for the main belligerents: what occurred in London might or might not have had the intended impact in America; and what occurred in America might or might not have been reported accurately in England – and only weeks later.

But if one can keep one's head, the rewards for the historian – and the reader – are immense. The war is a tale of loyalty, treachery, confusion, luck, shipwrecks, smuggling, slavery, nervous breakdowns, love, treasure ships and cruelty. There's imperialism at its worst and humanity at its best. And there is no more fascinating section of the war than the beginning, the period that Atkinson has targeted in this immense volume. (Perhaps he did this on purpose, but what better page count for a war that reached one of its most important crisis points in 1776 than exactly 776 pages?)

The British Are Coming looks at the crucial

period of 1775–1777. At the heart of the war is one of the greatest historical mysteries of the era: how did a loose collection of colonies, without any standing army or navy, win its independence from the most powerful country in the world, a nation that could wield seapower like no other ever had before? Often with this war, focus falls on the end - on the dismal surrender of the British general, Charles Cornwallis, at Yorktown in 1781, which effectively ended the war by bursting the bubble of political support for it in England. But none of that makes any sense unless you understand what happened between 1775 and 1777. To look at these years, moreover, is to see just how many times, and in how many ways, the war could have taken a different turn.

All of this means that the American War of Independence is a war that actually helps us to understand what warfare in this period actually was – how it worked in practice and how it shaped the world in which we now live. Atkinson has written a book that respects the significance of its subject, and he has done so with immense patience, scholarship and narrative flair. The achievement is quite brilliant,

The war is a tale of loyalty, treachery, confusion, luck, shipwrecks, smuggling, slavery, nervous breakdowns, love, treasure and cruelty

although in an age where one needs to be concise – yes, even us historians! – it could perhaps have been filleted to a length that does not take quite so long to reach its conclusion, or wander down so many blind (though important) alleys. But do we have another example of Atkinson's genius here? Is the book itself a metaphor for the war? I do hope so.

**Sam Willis** is a historian who presents the *Histories of the Unexpected* podcast (with James Daybell) and co-authored the accompanying book

#### **AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST**

**Babita Sharma** on the history of corner shops

"Kids who became members of the National Front were still buying their ice pops from Mr Patel and then later growing up to buy their cans of Diamone

"We know from

their cans of Diamond
White from Mr Patel. In the book I talk
about how this one guy, who was a
member of the National Front, would
still continue to be very polite to Mr
Patel even though, outside of the

**Helen Fry** on an operation to trick Nazi prisoners into giving up vital secrets

shop, he was a very vocal racist."

surviving transcripts
that the German
prisoners thought
their British
interrogators were
stupid and incompetent. But that was all
part of the deception. After an
interrogation the prisoner would
return to his room and boast to his
cellmate about what he hadn't let slip.
But what he didn't realise was that
there were hidden microphones in the
light fittings, and British intelligence
officers were listening in."

**Henry Hemming** on the British need to bring America into WWII

"In the days after Dunkirk, Britain was in a perilous situation. Meanwhile, in America, polls suggested that only eight per cent of Americans



thought it was time for the US to enter the war... Britain's ability to keep fighting, to keep waging war against Nazi Germany, really depended to a significant extent on what ordinary American citizens thought and felt about the war."

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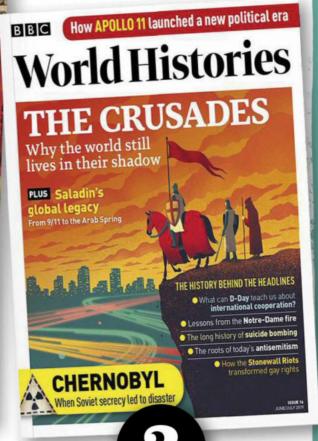
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# WORDS BY MATT ELTON AND ELLIE CAWTHORNE

#### SEASONAL

#### Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween

by Lisa Morton (Reaktion, 232 pages, £9.99)

**NOW IN PAPERBACK** 



#### **Spooky celebrations**

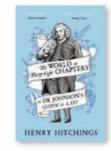
From cabbage-pulling and pranks to 'fate cakes' (baked in silence and placed under pillows to induce dreams), a range of surprising games, beliefs and traditions are behind today's Halloween festivities. This social history explores the roots of apple bobbing, pumpkin carving and more, before asking how an evening of terror cobbled together from a variety of origins went on to achieve global domination.

#### GEORGIAN

#### The World in 38 Chapters, or Dr Johnson's Guide to Life

by Henry Hitchings (Picador, 320 pages, £9.99)

**NOW IN PAPERBACK** 



#### **Words of wisdom**

Dr Johnson is well-known for his quotable musings on life ("Whoever thinks of going to bed before 12 o'clock is a scoundrel," for instance). Hitchings reveals how the advice dispensed by the essayist and lexicographer was grounded in his own life story. His approach knowingly echoes that of Johnson himself, with chapter titles such as "Of Genius, with sundry other scenes from the farce of life".

#### MEDIEVAL

## Beowulf: A Ladybird Expert Book

by Janina Ramirez (Michael Joseph, 56 pages, £8.99)



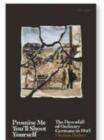
#### **Medieval myth-busting**

Surviving in just a single medieval manuscript, the Old English tale *Beowulf* continues to fascinate readers with its dragons, heroes and monsters. As part of the Ladybird Expert series (which has so far tackled historical subjects from Homer to Trafalgar), this accessible illustrated guide by art historian Janina Ramirez is a great introduction to the story, its origins and its enduring legacy.

#### WW2

#### Promise Me You'll Shoot Yourself: The Downfall of Ordinary Germans in 1945

by Florian Huber (Allen Lane, 304 pages, £20)



#### **Darkness and despair**

It's a bleak, arresting title, fittingly for this book's subject matter, which is the spate of suicides of Germans in the final months of the Second World War. Some killed themselves to avoid capture by oncoming troops, others as they saw the political project they had invested years in collapse around them. First published in Germany in 2015, this is a sobering study of a dark period of Europe's history.

#### FOLKLORE

#### Hollow Places: An Unusual History of Land and Legend

by Christopher Hadley (William Collins, 448 pages, £20)



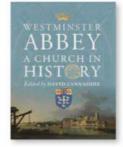
#### **Foundation myths**

Flitting from a 1930s classroom to the ancient yews of England's churchyards, to the strange lights that appeared on the Hertfordshire horizon in the early 19th century, this meditation on the power of folk myth lives up to its billing as an 'unusual history'. It's also engaging, wide-ranging stuff, exploring how stories become ties that bind – no matter how little they're grounded in the truth.

#### ARCHITECTURE

#### Westminster Abbey: A Church in History

edited by David Cannadine (Yale, 456 pages, £35)



#### Power and praise

Studded with photos and illustrations, this is an elegant biography of Westminster Abbey, whose current iteration was consecrated 750 years ago. Penned by experts like Diarmaid MacCulloch, each chapter focuses on a specific period and explores the building's role in the UK's political and religious life. Appendices and a glossary make this a valuable reference tool as well as a lush visual tour.

#### **ANCIENT WORLD**

#### Of Gods and Men: 100 Stories from Ancient Greece and Rome

selected by Daisy Dunn (Apollo, 640 pages, £25)



#### **Ancient history, ancient stories**

This anthology of classical world storytelling is hard to beat for big names: Cicero, Herodotus, Homer. Historian Daisy Dunn, who edits and introduces the 100 works here, notes that the line between fact and fiction was extremely porous, so it's fitting that accounts of the Peloponnesian War rub shoulders with tales of talking snakes and wing-shoed nymphs. A great introduction to a vivid body of work.

#### FICTION

#### Plenty Under the Counter

by Kathleen Hewitt (Imperial War Museum, 240 pages, £8.99)



#### A death in wartime

This tale of mystery and betrayal is one of a series of Second World War-era novels being republished by Imperial War Museums to mark the 80th anniversary of the conflict. We follow recuperating flight lieutenant David Heron as he tries to solve the murder of a man found in the garden of his boarding house; it's a twisty affair. A new introduction offers historical context to the fictional events.

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# 90 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VISIT By Jon Bauckham and Jonathan Wright 96 EXPLORE... The Church of St Mary, Warwick

#### VISIT

#### **Radical visions**

98 TRAVEL TO... Oslo

Despite receiving scant praise during his life, William Blake (1757–1827) has enjoyed a posthumous reputation as one of Britain's greatest ever artists. Equally known for his poetry, Blake is championed for his role in the Romantic movement at the turn of the 19th century, and his dreamlike images based on his own invented mythology.

Opening in September at Tate Britain, a new exhibition celebrates Blake's remarkable legacy, bringing together 300 paintings, drawings and illustrations for the largest display of the artist's work in nearly 20 years.

A number of pieces are shown at the gargantuan scale Blake had intended, with works such as *The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan* digitally enhanced and projected onto the gallery wall at several times their original size.

Other highlights include a preparatory sketch for his seance-inspired painting *The Ghost of a Flea*, plus a restaging of the only solo exhibition of Blake's work that took place during his lifetime, with Tate Britain recreating the cramped domestic room in which the show was held.

#### **William Blake**

Tate Britain, London / 11 September 2019—2 February 2020 / tate.org.uk/visit/tate-britain





#### LISTEN

#### **Highbrow chat**

Broadcast live, to engender a sense of urgency in the discussion, In Our Time remains one of the jewels in Radio 4's programming. That's in great part down to host Melvyn Bragg, who week after week encourages his guests, principally academics, to share their knowledge without disappearing down the more arcane byways of their specialisms.

A new series begins in September with a programme about Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812, and continues with a show focusing on the Christian idea of the rapture.

#### In Our Time

Scheduled for Thursday 19 September / BBC Radio 4



#### VISIT

#### Before the invasion

Standing on the banks of the Tyne, Arbeia Roman Fort is one of the north-east's most impressive archaeological treasures. However, the history of the site stretches back further than the Roman occupation, with excavations showing evidence of a farmstead 300 years before the invaders arrived. A new display explores the lives of the native Britons at Arbeia, featuring an array of ancient artefacts discovered at the fort.

#### **Britons at Arbeia**

Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields / Until 30 September / Free entry arbeiaromanfort.org.uk/whats-on

#### LISTEN

#### Hard lessons

In 1977, Panorama cameras headed for Faraday High, a large comprehensive in East Acton, London. The documentary showed scenes of chaotic classrooms where teachers appeared to have lost control. Introduced by David Dimbleby (pictured), the episode shocked viewers and sparked political controversy.

In a new Radio 4 programme, former Faraday pupil Shabnam Grewal looks back at a portrait of a school made at the high-water mark of the comprehensive movement, and which may have played a part in ushering in the more conservative approach to education that has prevailed in recent decades.

**Archive on 4: Panorama Broke My School** 

Scheduled for Saturday 21 September / BBC Radio 4

#### **WEEKLY TV & RADIO**

Visit historyextra.com for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes



#### WATCH

#### A royal visit

When the final episode of *Downton Abbey* was broadcast on Christmas Day in 2015, nearly 7 million viewers tuned in to witness the dramatic end to the show. And there, it seemed, the story of the Crawley family and their retainers would end, in a far-off and idealised world that was forever 1926. Then, last summer, it was announced that a film version of *Downton* was entering production, with a number of familiar faces returning to reprise their roles.

Once again written by the show's creator, Julian Fellowes, and directed by Michael Engler, who also helmed the TV finale, the film is set in 1927. At its centre lies the sheer kerfuffle of polishing, panic and protocol angst that ensues when it's announced that King George V and Queen Mary are to pay a visit to Downton.

With the Crawleys tightening their belts and employing fewer servants, this is hardly a convenient arrangement, and eventually causes Lady Mary (Michelle Dockery) to turn to the sensible Mr Carson (Jim Carter), now retired, for much-needed assistance as crisis looms.

#### **Downton Abbey**

On release in cinemas nationwide from Friday 13 September



#### VISIT

#### Sartorial stories

The historic relationship between men and women's fashion is the subject of a free exhibition at Ulster Museum, which runs until June next year. Featuring garments dating back to the 17th century, the colourful display explores the ways in which male style has been adopted by women's fashion over the past 400 years, and how the influence has sometimes flowed in both directions.

Appropriately entitled Vice Versa, the exhibition contains the work of some of history's most famous designers, such as Yves Saint Laurent's 'Le Smoking' – a tuxedo suit for women, inspired by a traditional male smoking jacket.

Other key pieces on display include a Chinese imperial robe dating from the Qing dynasty and a French silk embroidered court suit from the 1600s, along with outfits and accessories designed by the likes of fashion icons Coco Chanel, Alexander McQueen and Philip Treacy.

#### **Vice Versa**

Ulster Museum, Belfast / Until 28 June 2020 / Free entry nmni.com/whats-on

# HISTORY ON THE BOX

"I came across a diary entry where a woman mentions in passing that she joined the Resistance that morning"



Scriptwriter **PETER BOWKER** (left) talks to us about *World on Fire*, a new BBC One drama series that tells the story of the first year of the Second World War from the perspective of a multinational cast of characters

#### How did World on Fire come about?

Damien Timmer, a producer at Mammoth Screen, and I have always loved the 1970s documentary series *The World at War*. Damien was speculating about whether you could do a drama with the same ambition. I think the beginning was: is there a new way of telling the story of the Second World War that isn't solely from the British perspective? So we have a Polish family, a German family, a French couple, and so on. That way, the terrain of the series is the world. It seemed insane, but then you go away and that's the idea that won't leave you.

#### How do you piece a series like this together?

The ambition is that every series will be one year of the war. I was commissioned to write a 'bible' for the whole seven years. You have the history to draw on, and then it's a case as a dramatist of thinking, "Who are the characters? What do they want? What are the characters like?" And then let's put the characters in these situations. I think it would have been deadly if I'd gone the other way around and started with the siege of Tobruk or Dunkirk.

I wanted to write about the particular but celebrate the universal. Wartime allows you to do that. In a way, I want to try to reclaim the wartime generation from a kind of over-sentimentalised version.

#### How did you go about researching the topic?

Richard Overy of the University of Exeter advised from a historical overview perspective. And Imperial War Museums were incredibly helpful. We got access to their reading room, where you can order obscure manuscripts. I'd be saying, "Have you got anything written by young people, say

a 19-year-old woman in Poland, at this time? I've got a character who's a waitress." And they would have diaries, and so on.

I came across an entry where a young woman says, "Trying to find decent coffee, trying to find a boyfriend" – and then happens to mention in passing that she joined the Resistance that morning. That's a gift. And Richard Overy said very early: "You must remember that people's day-to-day concerns don't change. The concerns of humanity remain reassuringly mundane."

#### Tell us about the German family, the Rosslers.

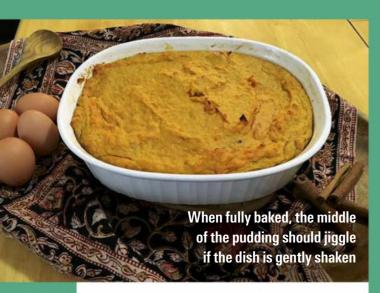
I wanted to write about a family who weren't anti-Nazi activists, nor Nazis, but simply Germans living under a Nazi government on a day-to-day level. Their story becomes about eugenics and euthanasia in regard to children with disabilities.

*World on Fire* will be broadcast on BBC One in September



Rising stars Zofia Wichlacz and Jonah Hauer-King appear in the seven-part BBC One series

# HISTORY COOKBOOK



#### TASTE

# Sweet potato pudding

Perhaps surprisingly, the world's largest research library devoted to the works of William Shakespeare is located not in England but across the pond in Washington DC.

And as part of its mission to understand the era in which the Bard lived, the Folger Shakespeare Library is home to a huge collection of early modern cookbooks. This dish was devised by Dr Amanda E Herbert as part of a collaborative research project funded by the Mellon Foundation, and inspired by a recipe found in a book kept by the Grenville family of Worcestershire.

Sweet potatoes were a relatively new addition to Europe in the 17th century, so this dish would have been regarded as an exotic treat.

**Difficulty:** 3/10 **Time:** 1 hour 15 mins

#### INGREDIENTS

3lb sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into two-inch pieces
3/4lb butter, softened
120ml sherry (ideally oloroso)
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
5 whole eggs, lightly beaten

#### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C and bring a pot of unsalted water to a boil. Cook the potato pieces in the water until tender.

After draining, mash the potatoes with the butter in a bowl until the mixture is fully combined.

Fold in the sherry, cinnamon and eggs, and bake in a buttered casserole dish for 45 minutes. The pudding will continue to set as it cools.

Recipe printed with permission of shakespeareandbeyond.folger.edu

#### VISIT

#### Faces of the past

Born in 1887, Jewish portrait photographer Gertrud 'Gerty' Simon carved out a successful career in Weimar-era Berlin, where she captured images of the city's most prominent figures, ranging from Lotte Lenya to Albert Einstein.

However, as the Nazis rose to power during the early 1930s, Simon was forced to flee Germany with her son, eventually settling in London. Thankfully, she soon made a name for herself in the British capital and was able to establish a thriving new studio, photographing the likes of Aneurin Bevan and Dame Peggy Ashcroft.

An exhibition at the Wiener Library – the world's oldest centre for Holocaust studies – showcases dozens of Simon's original prints, which had been hidden away for decades until they were donated to the library in 2016.

Poignantly, the display includes photographs of men and women whose identities have been lost to history.

Other sitters – such as Judith Kerr (pictured above) – would later become refugees, just like Simon herself.

#### Berlin/London: The Lost Photographs of Gerty Simon

The Wiener Library, London / Until 15 October 2019 wienerlibrary.co.uk/gerty-simon



Author Judith Kerr was photographed by Gerty Simon as a child. Kerr's father, Alfred, was a noted theatre critic in Weimar Germany

#### WATCH

#### High-rolling fraudster

The story of Michel Cohen shocked the art world. A high-school dropout from a modest background, he became rich and successful as an art dealer, a man who sold works by Picasso, Monet and Chagall to the US elite. He had homes in New York and Malibu.

Then, as this new programme from Vanessa Engle (best known for her documentaries *Lefties* and *Jews*) recounts, Cohen's life fell apart dramatically. Living the high life and speculating on the stock market, he ran up huge debts. In order to cover his losses, he swindled numerous collectors, auctioneers and high-end galleries out of more than \$50m.

In 2003, after Cohen went on the run with his family, Interpol caught up with him in Brazil. In another twist,

facing extradition, Cohen (left) managed to escape from jail in Rio de Janeiro and seemingly vanished.

Sixteen years later, Engle not only tells Cohen's story, but tracks him down to hear his version of events. This is a documentary which, in exploring the secrecy surrounding the wealthy and their money, should say much about our recent history.

#### **Arena: The \$50 Million Art Swindle**

Scheduled for September / BBC Two

Film-maker Vanessa Engle tells the story of Michel Cohen's criminal exploits

#### LISTEN

#### Cultural values

Despite plenty of generic figures representing angels and mothers, Wales has a dearth of statues honouring specific women. Why is this? In a Radio 4 documentary, Jasmine Donahaye considers how Welsh culture has been skewed towards male symbols, a situation reflected in public art.

This may be changing.
Recently, a public poll to select
Wales's 'Hidden Heroine' decided
that Betty Campbell, the first black
headteacher in the country, should
be commemorated in Cardiff. But
will her statue, asks Donahaye,
have a deeper significance beyond
becoming a landmark?

#### Statue No 1: A Welsh Woman Takes the Plinth

Scheduled for mid September / BBC Radio 4



Betty Campbell, the first black headteacher in Wales, will be commemorated with a new statue

#### WATCH

#### Georgian scenes

The copper-coloured walls and floor of the grand ballroom are illuminated by so many candles that the use of hairspray is banned as a fire risk. Actors dressed in early 19th-century costumes prepare for a take as technicians bustle around.

This is the set of *Sanditon*, a new, Andrew Davies-penned adaptation of Jane Austen's final, unfinished novel. Filming took place – as we discovered during a visit – not on location in Georgian Bath but in the utilitarian environs of Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios. Here, along with the interiors, production company Red Planet Pictures built the external facades of Sanditon itself, an up-and-coming coastal resort town.

Central to the drama is Charlotte Heywood (Rose Williams), a spiky heroine moving through a world where the themes of class and money are examined with Austen's trademark shrewdness. A strong ensemble cast includes Theo James, Anne Reid and Kris Marshall.

#### Sanditon

Airing now / ITV



# A masterpiece of Gothic grandeur

After being ravaged by fire, this Norman house of worship was rebuilt in a sumptuous array of styles by the wealthy earls of Warwick Castle. **EMMA J WELLS** praises a treasure trove of ecclesiastical eclecticism

ne can be forgiven for overlooking the magnificent jewel that is the Collegiate Church of St Mary when strolling through Warwick; after all, this is the heart of Shakespeare country. But just a few moments inside this treasure trove of eclecticism will reveal why it holds a reputation as one of England's greatest architectural achievements and a symbol of medieval authority. Step into the world of the nation's most powerful magnates.

St Mary's started life in 1123 thanks to the efforts of Roger de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Warwick, though little remains of his original Norman construction beside the crypt. Observe its impressive Romanesque pillars, as well as the unexpected delight of one of England's two remaining ducking stools.

In fact, the medieval spirit of this curious building is strong, with its sumptuous vaulted ceilings of intricate stone ribs and bosses – until you realise that it's actually an odd Gothic-Renaissance concoction. Following London's lead, Warwick was consumed by a great fire on 5 September 1694. The medieval west tower, nave and transepts were not spared, but Midlands architect Sir William Wilson came to the rescue, reconstructing the church in the interesting mixture of styles we see today. Look for the 'dole shelves' in the south nave, where bread was placed for the poor.

What has come down to us is a masterpiece of Gothic grandeur, basking in the shadow of nearby Warwick Castle, the earls' principle residence. St Mary's chief benefactors were the Beauchamp family. Much of the

**II** Richard's tomb is overwhelming, complete with life-size effigy and griffin guarding its feet structure is the work of Thomas de Beauchamp, 11th Earl of Warwick (d1369), who ordered that his body, along with that of his wife, Katherine, should be buried within the chancel – thereby initiating its grand reconstruction as a family mausoleum. You can find their double alabaster memorial, hands entwined, in front of the high altar.

Yet Thomas's influence pales in comparison with that of his descendant, Richard, 13th Earl (1382–1439), who was Knight of the Garter, Governor of France and Normandy and Captain of Rouen at the time of Joan of Arc's trial – no shoddy CV. Following his death, over two decades were spent constructing the spectacular jewel in the church's crown to house the nobleman's remains. The Beauchamp Chapel, to the south of the chancel, was one of the most expensive architectural commissions of its day, ringing in at more than £2,500 – fit for a king, never mind an earl. The sheer magnificence of Richard's tomb is overwhelming, with its life-size bronze effigy, dressed as a paragon of chivalry in a suit of Milanese armour, complete with bear and griffin guarding its feet and unusual gilded cage or 'hearse'. Note Richard's posture: hands held apart in praise, he projects his gaze upward. Follow suit and you can admire the carved ceiling boss of the Virgin Mary, crowned as queen of Heaven.

Also, don't miss the adjacent garish tombs of the Dudleys, inheritors of the Beauchamps' legacy: Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's favourite and founder of Lord Leycester Hospital; his brother Ambrose; and Robert's son, the "noble Impe", who died aged three.

Without a doubt, this truly is the greatest 'non-royal' chapel in England. 😐

Emma J Wells is an architectural historian at the University of York. Her book *Heaven on Earth*: The Lives and Legacies of the World's Greatest Cathedrals is forthcoming from Head of Zeus

VISIT For more information, head over to stmaryswarwick.org.uk

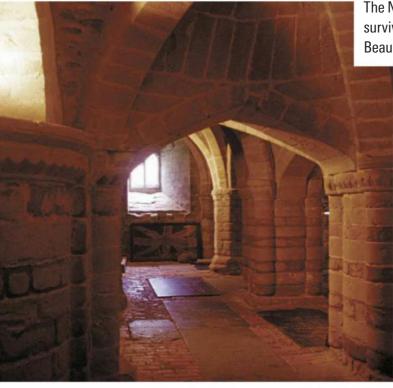








ABOVE: The elaborate Beauchamp Chapel, which houses the remains of Richard Beauchamp, along with the garish tombs of the Dudleys LEFT: Richard's bronze effigy gazes upwards, hands parted in prayer



The Norman crypt – the only surviving part of Roger de Beaumont's original church

#### MORE FROM US

For more features on medieval history, go to historyextra.com/ period/medieval





## TRAVEL TO... OSLO, NORWAY

#### Myths, Munch and fjord-side strolls

Fast-growing Oslo makes for a rewarding Nordic city break. While its striking modern architecture, world-class art and gentrifying neighbourhoods draw the crowds, Norway's capital also offers visitors a crash course in the country's culture, history and mythology.

Oslo is a city on the water, and if you time it right it offers a wonderful place for a sunny stroll along the fjord that shares its name. Once you've seen the Royal Palace, dramatic Opera House and Akershus Festning – Oslo's fortress – it's time to start exploring further. Frogner-parken's sculpture-filled pastures are a lovely place for a picnic while you take in Gustav Vigeland's much-loved creations.

Headline museums in Oslo include the Viking Ship Museum and adjacent Kon-Tiki Museum, dedicated to adventurer Thor Heyerdahl's balsa raft. Both are located in Bygdøy, a relaxed residential area of the city. Meanwhile, the Munch Museum in Tøyengata houses a huge array of works by *The Scream*'s creator.

Underlining Oslo's winter credentials – and this is a great place to visit year-round – the Holmenkollen ski jump is an essential stop to explore snow sports and take in one of the city's best views. Visit in winter and you'll see locals on the metro heading for Nordmarka, an area of forest popular for cross-country skiing.

Oslo is also an emerging foodie destination, with areas like Grünerløkka and Tøyen offering reinterpreted Nordic staples, combined with influences from recent waves of immigration. Budget-friendly eating and drinking can also be found in the Bislett and Sankt Olavs Plass neighbourhoods, the latter of which has some lovely 18th-century streets to wander along, far from the waterfront crowds.

An hour by train from Oslo is the historic fortress town of Fredrikstad, which makes for a fascinating day trip.

#### **IF YOU LIKE THIS...**

 Hop on a train at Oslo's Central station for the spectacular journey to **Bergen, Norway**'s largest west-coast city.

.....

• Helsinki, Finland, is a less celebrated Nordic capital with a very different history.

**By Tom Hall**, travel writer and author of *Lonely Planet's Best Ever Travel Tips* 

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# Autumn Heritage Collection

























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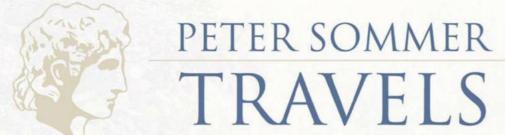
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# AWARD-WINNING EXPERT-LED TOURS & GULET CRUISES













TOUR OPERATOR OF THE YEAR 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018

EXPERT-LED ARCHAEOLOGICAL & CULTURAL TOURS & GULET CRUISES



#### Across

- **8** Greek-born historian and biographer from the second-century AD, who wrote about Alexander the Great's campaigns (6)
- **9** Last Anglo-Saxon king, whose rule lasted just nine months (6,2)
- **11** Political union of Germany and Austria, achieved by Hitler's annexation in 1938 (9)
- **12** Dutch town renowned for its pottery; birthplace of Jan Vermeer (5)
- **13** Pre-Columbian people of the Lesser Antilles and neighbouring South American coast (5)
- **15** Term denoting a direct descendant of the Jewish patriarch, Jacob (9)
- **17** Chinese soldier and statesman, head of the exiled nationalist government in Taiwan from 1949 (6,3-4)
- **22** The fifth-century Greek 'father of history', who wrote about the Greco-Persian wars (9)
- **24** An Islamic title (meaning 'guided one') used by some social revolutionaries, such as Muhammad Ahmad in 19th-century Sudan (5)
- **26** Game thought to be derived from the sixth-century Indian war game Chaturanga (5)
- **28** Name, meaning 'heat', used for the 11th month of the French republican calendar, adopted in 1793 (9)
- **30** Mythological Greek hero, a central figure in Homer's *Iliad* (8)

**31** Originally a term for people of African or

European (mainly French or Spanish) descent born in the

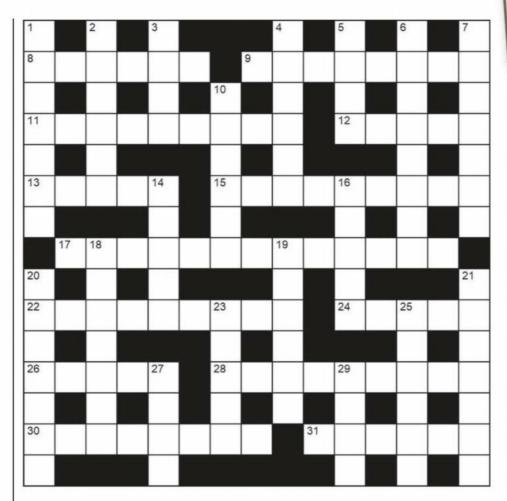
West Indies, or parts of French or Spanish America (6)

Edward I built this castle beside which Welsh town? (see 18 down)

# Wine.

#### Down

- **1** In 1503–4, Columbus and his crew were stranded for a year on this island (7)
- **2** Simon \_\_\_, 19th-century Canadian fur trader and explorer, after whom a British Columbian river is named (6)
- **3** English town known as 'Aquae Sulis' by the Romans (4)
- **4** Type of rifle, adopted by the German army in the late 19th century, whose bolt-action mechanism has been copied worldwide (6)
- **5** See 27 down
- **6** Australian city named after a princess of Saxe-Meiningen who was married to an English king (8)
- **7** The decade that, in the western world, saw the blossoming of the counterculture movement (7)
- **10** Pioneer of computer science, awarded an OBE for his work at Bletchley Park (6)



**14** See 29 down

**16** British venue of a famous horse race, first run officially in 1780 (5)

**18** A castle built by Edward I dominates this town in west Wales (7)

**19** \_\_ House, one-time residence of the Duke of Wellington, known as 'No 1, London' (6)

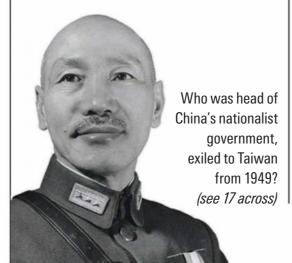
**20** Native American people, one of the 'Five Civilised Tribes' forcibly resettled under the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (7)

- **21** Those belonging to Hitler, 'discovered' in the early 1980s and initially authenticated, were later revealed to be fake (7)
- **23** Historic custom whereby members of the laity contributed part of their income to the church (5)
- **25** English navigator, Henry \_\_\_, who was never seen again after being cast adrift by mutineers in 1611 (6)

**27/5** Ancient trade route linking China with the west, used by Marco Polo (4,4)

**29/14** Professor of classics at Cambridge, whose TV series include 2012's *Meet the Romans*... (4,5)

Compiled by **Eddie James** 



#### HOW TO ENTER

Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to *BBC History Magazine*, October 2019 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA or email them to *october2019@ historycomps.co.uk* by 5pm on 2 October 2019. ■ Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the December 2019 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/* ■ Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. ■ Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here □ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy* 

**World War II** 

**Infographics** 

By Jean Lopez, Nicolas

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graphics, charts, maps and

numbers. Tracing the course of

the conflict from its roots to its

devastating aftermath, it uses

data to shed new light on a key

episode in global history.

**Jonathan Fenby** 

#### **Solution to our August 2019 Crossword**

**Across:** 6 Malory 7 Valencia 10 Lafayette 11 Bevin 12 Wells 14 Abyssinia 16 Anhalt 17 Alcuin 19 Blackfoot 21 Ether 22 Astor 24 Maidstone 26 Uprising 27 Contra

**Down:** 1 Olaf 2 Freya Stark 3 Naseby 4 Webb 5 Kaunda 6 Malawi 8 Cavendish 9 U Thant 13 Lancaster 15 Succession 17 Astrid 18 Braemar 19 Brague 20 Osman I 23 Rusk 25 Otto

#### Five winners of *The World of the Crusades*

I Johanne, Lincolnshire; J Carrell, Cambridgeshire; L Brignall, Gloucestershire; N Jones, Somerset; R Woodroofe, Wiltshire

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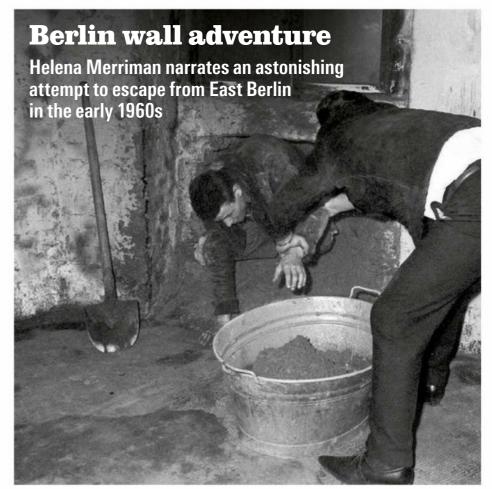
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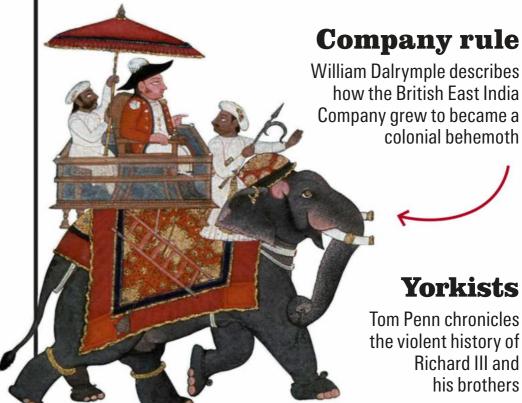
The Hampshire city has long been at the heart of England's history. Ahead of our History Weekend, Ryan Lavelle takes you on a tour... historyextra.com/winchester-

history

# NEXT MONTH

November issue on sale 3 October 2019







# revival Dominic Sandh

Dominic Sandbrook on why the Falklands War transformed Britain's prospects



Television presenter Julia Bradbury chooses

## **Amelia Earhart**

1897-1937



When did you first hear about Amelia Earhart? I remember hearing stories about Amelia when I was about eight years old. My dad is a history man, so most likely he told me about her adventures. I became fascinated by this amazing woman who set all these flying records, had

Julia Bradbury is a television presenter, best known for having co-presented *Countryfile*. To read about her favourite walks, see theoutdoorguide.co.uk

her own clothing line and was an associate editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. She just seemed so accomplished and talented.

What kind of person was she? I get the impression she was a big character, which I admire in a woman. But she was also a great supporter of women and equality in general, so there was obviously a nurturing side to her too. She didn't just want to achieve great things for herself, she wanted to make it easier for other women to achieve their ambitions – aeronautical or not. There was a kindness about her that you don't always find in such driven people.

What made her a hero? Everything was against her in those days. Women didn't fly. Women were certainly not pilots. Women were not adventurers. And they did not set records. Yet Amelia did all of these things and more. She was an original trailblazer. What's more, she knew the risks involved – flying in the primitive planes of the time required nerves of steel – and was prepared to die for her adventures. I also admire her for her attempts to help other women get airborne: she was instrumental in setting up the Ninety-Nines, a mentoring organisation for female pilots, which now has more than 150 chapters around the world. Lastly, I admire her modern approach to marriage, which she regarded as a partnership of equals.

What was her finest hour? It's got to be the first non-stop solo transatlantic flight by a woman in 1932. She set off from Newfoundland [in present-day Canada] in a single-engine Lockheed Vega 5B with the intention of flying to Paris, but encountered strong winds, icy conditions and mechanical problems. So after nearly 15 hours in the air she was forced to land in a field in Northern Ireland. It was still an incredible achievement, and was rightfully recognised as such. When she landed, a farm boy apparently asked her if she had flown far and she replied: "From America!"

#### What do you think she would have gone on to achieve if she had not died so young?

Who knows? If she had been born 40 years later, she could have become one of the first women to walk on the moon.

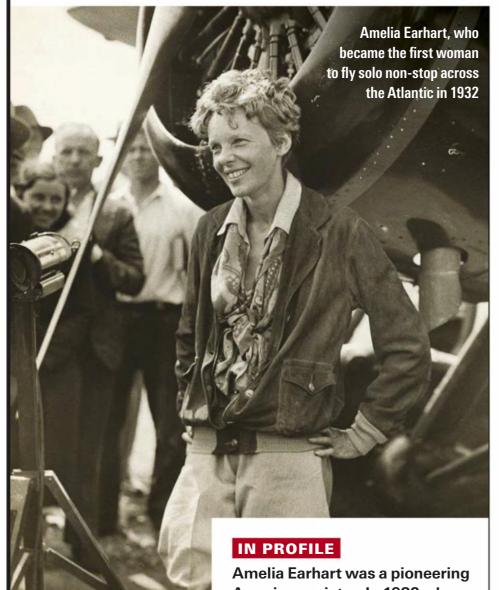
If you could meet Earhart, what would you ask her? Firstly, I'd ask: "Were you frightened when you were flying solo?" And secondly, I'd ask her how magical the stars were up there while she was flying around the 'waistline of the world'...

Illia Bradbury was talking to York Membery

LISTEN AGAIN

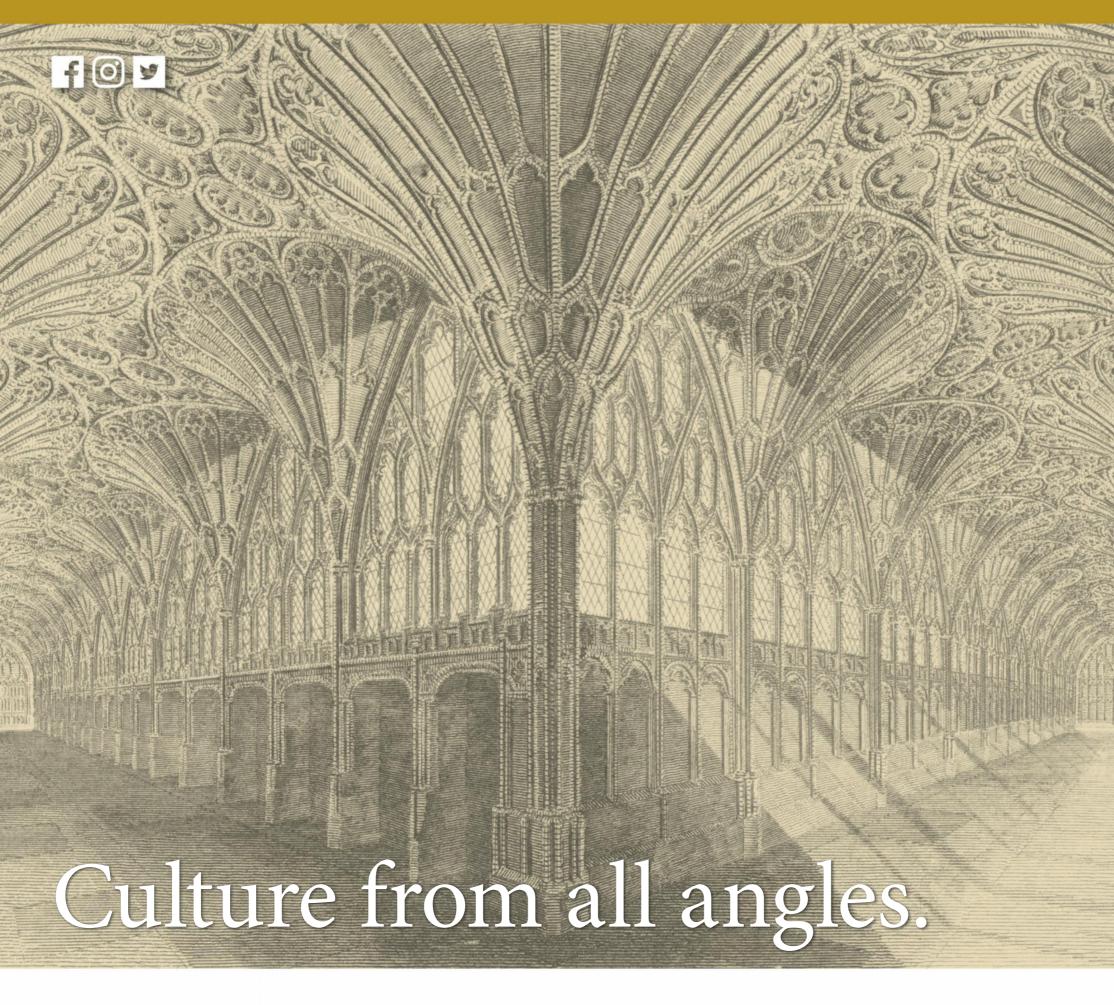
In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxsb





American aviator. In 1932, she became the first woman to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic. Two years later, she became the first aviator to fly solo from Hawaii to the US mainland. During an attempt to circumnavigate the globe in 1937, she and her navigator, Fred Noonan, disappeared over the Pacific Ocean, never to be seen again. She was 39.

When she landed in Northern Ireland, a farm boy asked her if she had flown far and she replied: 'From America!'



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